The COMIC CRUSADER

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CRUSADER COMMENTS

Greetings friends and welcome to another issue of COMIC CRUSADER! In this issue, I begin, what I hope will be, a very interesting series..."Great Comic Book Clashes!" Throughout the history of this four color medium, there have been certain classic confrontations between heroes and villians. Almost every really memorable hero had an equally memorable foe. It will be the purpose of these articles to record the most noteworthy of these battles.

For this series' first installment, I decided to present one of the oldest "Comic Book Clashes"...The Battles Between Capt. Marvel and Dr. Sivana! Only one person could do justice to such an article and that person is Don Newton. Don's knowledge of Capt. Marvel is second to none. As a result, he and his talented friend John Clark, along with a helping hand from C.C. Beck, have provided a first rate report on this topic.

With a lead feature like Capt. Marvel vs. Sivana, it seemed only natural that I devote the larger portion of this issue to a Capt. Marvel theme. Bob Cosgrove's Binder interview and my interviews with Kurt Schaffenberger and Capt. Marvel Jr.'s new artist, Dave Cookrum, make up part of the other Marvel oriented features. It goes without saying, that I thank all these fine men for helping put this issue together.

Powerful and dramatic are the words that best describe Part 2 of Steve Ditko's "H-Series!" Ditko's mastery at story telling is at its peak, in this exciting climax to a story begun last issue. People have said, "Ditko Preaches!" Well, if telling a solid story with a moral is preaching, then I hope all of fandom hears the word!

Bill Everett was a friend of mine and I felt his passing deeply! In "Tale Of An Ancient Mariner" I've tried to create a small tribute to his career. I think you'll find it quite informative in the areas of his life and Water World characters.

Recently, another great of the comic book industry passed away. This man was Syd Shores! This issue's back cover was done by Syd, I believe, as a proposed cover for The Hulk Annual #1, but was replaced later by a Steranko piece. I'm pleased to present it to you now.

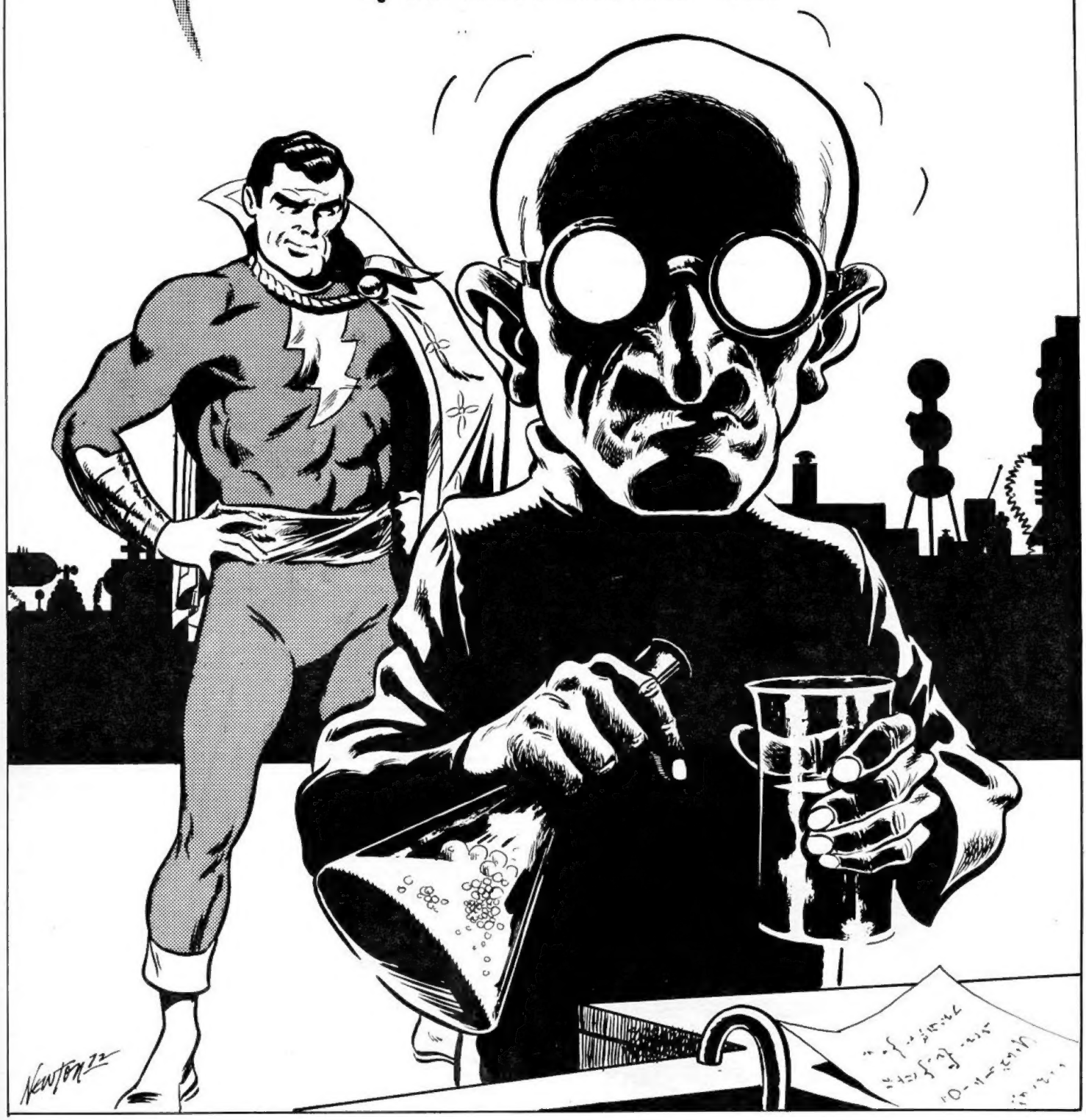
Due to the special printing needed on this issue's cover, this editorial is being typed well in advance of the completion of this issue's contents. Because of this, I'd like to thank anyone not mentioned above for contributing to this effort!

Also, a special thanks to English artist Dave Gibbons and friend Wayne Pond for their artistic contributions and to you readers for purchasing this issue!

Martin L. Greim

COME ON SIVANA, TIME TO RESUME OUR 13 YEAR WAR!

By DON NEWTON and JOHN CLARK

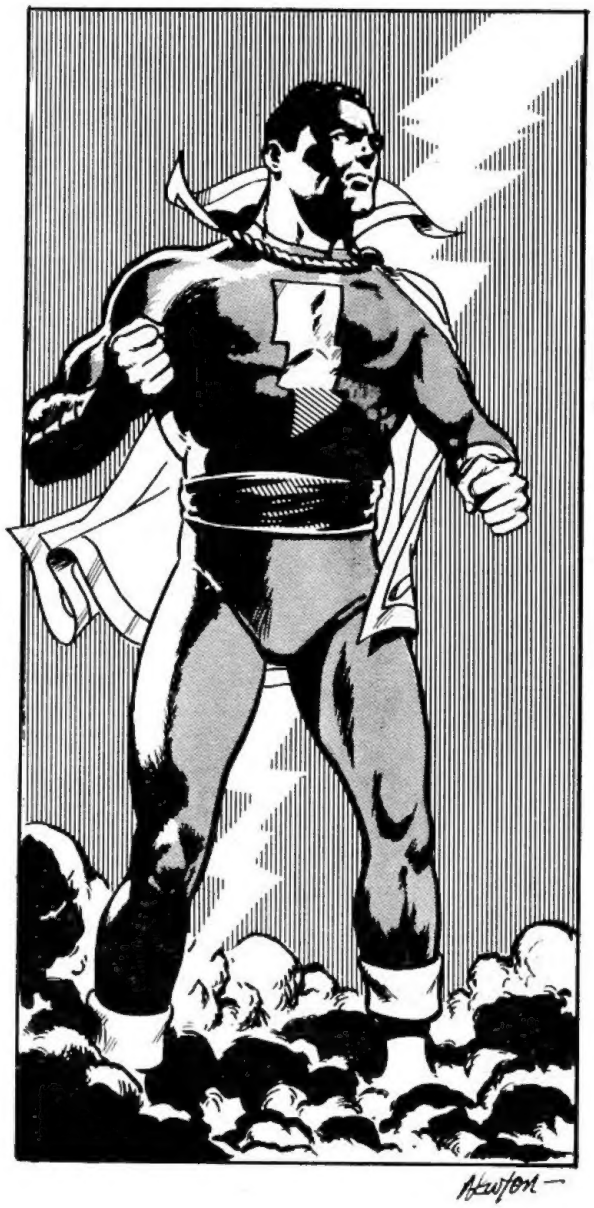


The "GOLDEN AGE OF COMICS" gave birth to the costume hero, and it was during this time that the "fad" reached its peak. Some heroes were as bad as the human mind can conceive...others attained a greatness still unsurpassed.

A great many in fandom have long been of the opinion that the truly great heroes were augmented, and perhaps even made great by their villains. A survey of such would tend to bear them out.

To be sure, Superman had Luthor; Capt. America had the Red Skull; Daredevil, the Claw; Batman, the Joker, Two Face, etc. Captain Marvel, however, is considered by many to have been the greatest single character of the Golden Age. As(seemingly) befits such an honor, Capt. Marvel fought an assortment of many great villains, including Mr. Mind, Mr. Atom, Ibac, and many others. However, if we are to single out Capt. Marvel's greatest villain, the choice would have to be his first: DR. THADDEUS BODOG SIVANA. (Pronounced Siva'na)

Sivana was designed to be the exact opposite of Capt. Marvel. Where the Capt. was a massive, 6' 2", 210 lbs., handsome, honest and always fair, Sivana was scrawney, barely cracking 5', ugly, mean and treacherous. But, Sivana was all of these in a humorous way. Therein lies the success of Sivana, Capt. Marvel, and most of the Marvel characters: they never played things seriously. It was all for laughs. Oh



sure, Sivana wanted to declare himself ruler of the world and impose burdonsome taxes on the people, but he was lovable anyway. Sure, he talked about killing and torturing, but he never did. Sivana, originally intended to be cruel and villainous, became, instead, human and lovable.

THE CREATION OF SIVANA:

We were fortunate in procuring the aid of Mr. C.C. Beck in determining the actual creation of Dr. Sivana. He described it in this way!
"Back in the thirties I was busy making model airplanes with a friend who worked in a drug store. The druggest was a bald headed, big nosed old fellow, quite short in stature, and he always wore a white 'doctor's coat.' Does this give you a clue to Sivana's origin? While I created the 'World's Maddest Scientist's' physical appearance, Bill Parker (the gifted writer/editor who started many of Fawcett's characters off) created his mental attitude and name."
Sivana's name is an anagram of two Hindu words: "Siva," a Hindu God, "The Destroyer," and "Nirvana," the complete calm and control of one's being.

SIVANA'S CHILDREN:

Sivana's two original children were Beautia and Magnificus. In contrast to Sivana's ugliness, both were beautiful specimens of mankind. Both were also good and honest, but went along with their father's schemes because they felt sorrow for the old man (more about this later).

They were both very good characters, but, apparently, the publisher didn't like them and so they were sentenced to limbo.

Magnificus, the Adonis-like son, was forgotten almost immediately. His life, to my knowledge, was limited to one appearance in Whiz #15 (if I'm wrong, let me know).

Beautia, the better of the two characters, was Sivana's daughter, and, as her name implies, she was beautiful (if a bit flat). Because she was a romantic interest for Capt. Marvel, she was allowed to remain in the stories. But she was continually pushed further and further into the background, 'till she was more or less forgotten.

After the advent of Capt. Marvel Jr. and Mary Marvel, the big shots at Fawcett decided (for obvious reasons) to give Sivana two new offspring: Sivana, Jr. and Georgia, who both looked exactly like their father and were totally evil.

Mr. Beck spoke of them thusly:

"At the publishers order, those two bastard children were created, by what writer and artist I really don't remember. They were inhuman monsters, stiff and mechanical in appearance and character, almost like robots. They appeared mostly in stories written, drawn and edited by Fawcett men with whom I had no contact."

In Capt. Marvel Adventures #121, Sivana again visits the past in order to destroy Billy. This time he uses a time machine, and, strangely enough, he doesn't lose his memory. I guess those time machines have it all over chemical solutions. In the past, Sivana arranges to be "held up" by a thug. Capt. Marvel, having never met Sivana rescues the old man and they become fast friends. Sivana convinces Capt. Marvel that he is a benevolent scientist, and Cap aids him in creating what he believes to be a ray that will wipe out all disease germs on earth. Actually, it is a death ray! Sivana asks Cap to change to Billy to test the ray. It doesn't work, so Sivana has the Capt. correct the malfunotion (it needed more power in the "Z" phase). Capt. Marvel is about to change back to Billy when he realizes that Sivana (since they'd just met) could not possibly know his alter ego. Under threat of violence, Sivana reveals his plot, whereupon Capt. Marvel smashes the machine...with Sivana!! (Capt. Marvel was always pretty mean to Sivana...). As a result of this beating, Sivana develops partial amnesia, remembering nothing of his plot. Capt. Marvel places him back in his time machine and sends him back to 1951. Capt. Marvel is waiting for the machine to appear because he remembers sending it off. So Sivana is put in jail, still wondering how to dispose of the "Big Red Cheese."

THEIR EARLY ENCOUNTERS:

In the early days of Whiz Comics, Capt. Marvel had more than his share of tussles with our favorite mad scientist. Some were of the best quality Fawcett put out.

In the recent revival of Capt. Marvel, in D.C.'s "Shazam," Beck was called upon to draw Jr. and Georgia:

"I had a lot of fun making them human, funny characters, which they all should have been in the first place. But this is the sort of approach Fawcett always fought against, as they seemed to believe that all comic books should be filled only with monsterous, mindless, incredibly grim (and dull) characters. Wendell Crowley, Otto Binder, Bill Woolfolk, Rod Reed, and others agreed with me that comic books should be 'comic' whenever possible, and the books we handled were. They sold so well that the publisher could only mutter to himself as he counted the money coming in."

CAPT. MARVEL vs. SIVANA...Their First Encounter and Its Retellings:

Capt. Marvel first encountered Dr. Sivana in the first issue of Whiz Comics. At this time, Capt. Marvel's alter ego, Billy Batson, was still a newsboy, selling on a street corner. The headline in the papers he is selling reads: "Maniac Scientist Threatens U.S. Radio System!" The "Maniac Scientist" is, of course, Sivana, who has a ray that will destroy all radio broadcasting. He threatens to do so unless a ransom of 50 million dollars is paid.

The next day, as Billy is hawking his newspapers, he hears two of Sivana's henchmen discussing the plan. He follows them to the mad doctor's hideout. One of Billy's customers is Sterling Morris, owner of radio station W.H.I.Z. Billy naturally figures that Moris will be interested in Sivana's whereabouts, and rushes to tell him what he's learned. Morris disregards the boy, however, incredulous that Billy could have discovered the hideout where all the police had failed. "Ridiculous! If it turned out as you say, why I'd... Ha Ha!...Yes, if you're right Billy, I'll give you a job as a radio announcer!" Billy changes to Capt. Marvel and stops Sivana's scheme, wrecking his machine, although the scientist himself escapes. Morris, being as good as his word, gives Billy the job he would hold for the remainder of the Marvel series, without even so much as an F.C.C. exam.

With the publication of Capt. Marvel Adventures #80, Fawcett decided it was a good time to retell Cap's origin.

The year is 1948 and Sivana is in his laboratory lamenting his many failures at conquering the universe: "I'm the world's greatest genius! But what good is that against the World's Mightiest Mortal? I wish Capt. Marvel had never lived!"

Sivana reasons that if Billy Batson had been killed before he met Shazam, then Capt. Marvel would never exist. "I'll work out a chemical solution that will enable me to visit the past! Heh heh heh!" As Sivana goes into the past, however, his memory of future events is wiped out. He is not aware of Billy or Capt. Marvel, and so history repeats itself.

ALL THE POWERS OF THE GREATEST MEN IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD HAVE BEEN GATHERED TOGETHER AND PLACED IN THE HANDS OF THE BOY REPORTER, BILLY BATSON, WHEN HE PRONOUNCES THE NAME OF THE ANCIENT WIZARD SHAZAM HE BECOMES, IN A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHTNING, THE MIGHTY CAPTAIN MARVEL!
SOLOMON... WISDOM
HERCULES... STRENGTH
ATLAS..... STAMINA
ZEUS..... POWER
ACHILLES... COURAGE
MERCURY... SPEED

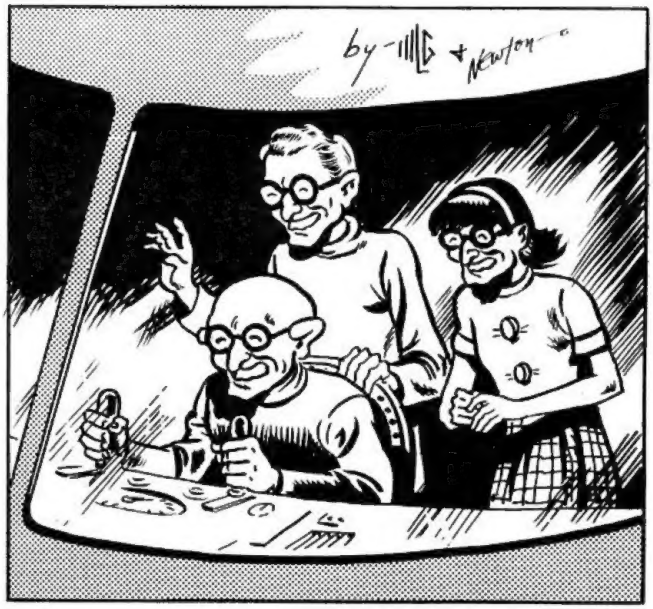
In Whiz #3, the story opens with Billy receiving a "mysterious news tip!" "Professor Xerxes Smith is planning a rocket flight to the planet Venus. Wonderful news story. Suggest you see him. He lives in Belair. A Friend." Billy locates Professor Smith, really Dr. Sivana, disguised with a bushy black beard and begins to interview him. Billy "convinces" the professor to fly him to Venus. When they arrive, they are attacked by Venusian monsters. Billy becomes Capt. Marvel and defeats them. Sivana is astounded! "But, you were a boy a minute ago..." He has learned Billy's secret. As they talk, they are attacked by "Glompers," the frog-like inhabitants of Venus and are overpowered (Capt. Marvel wasn't really that swift in those days). The Glompers take them to their palace, where they meet the queen of Venus: "I, Beautia, bid you welcome." Beautia has Professor Smith released and he reveals himself as Dr. Sivana. Capt. Marvel is "securely fastened by 50 ton weights and supersteel cables." With Cap. helpless, Sivana explains his plan. He and Beautia plot to conquer the Earth (this is for the first time!). "With her beauty and my brains, Queen Beautia and I will rule the Earth!"

Beautia offers Cap his life, if he will marry her. He refuses and is sentenced to death. A Venusian monster is turned loose as Sivana and company rocket toward Earth. With them gone, Capt. Marvel breaks free and vanquishes the monster and all the Venusians (we knew he could do it, all along!). Using the wisdom of Soloman, he designs a rocket and speeds to Earth. On Earth, Sivana has already perfected a gas that will make all men his slaves. Capt. Marvel arrives in the nick of time, though, and proceeds to demolish everything. Sivana's henchmen intervene, and in the ensuing battle, Sivana and Beautia escape. But, Capt. Marvel is left a note: "In spite of everything, I think you're marvelous. You and I will meet again. Au Revouir, 'Beautia." Capt. Marvel blushes.

The story in Whiz #14 picks up where the previous one had left off, with Sivana in jail. The guards are puzzled. Although Sivana faces serious charges in court, he seems calm, making endless calculations. He keeps calling for more paper. Two weeks later, he is brought before the judge. "Thaddeus Bodog Sivana: It is the order of this court that in punishment for your innumerable crimes, you be sentenced to serve 77 consecutive prison terms, totalling 9000 years at hard labor! Have you anything to say?" "Only this... You've got to catch me first! Heh! Heh!" Sivana walks through the wall of the court! Though he is searched for, he has vanished without a trace. Days go by, and then a succession of mysterious crimes begin. First, the Federal Building in Washington is blown up; Fort Knox is robbed of 420 million dollars; and then, the President of the United States is kidnaped! Billy is sent to Washington to get the story. The guards there insist that it was a ghost who kidnaped the President. One of the guards describes the ghost as a "bald headed old man." Of course, we knew it was Sivana all the time, but Billy has just realized it. He's about to divulge this information to his listeners, when he too is kidnaped. Billy is knocked out, and when he awakens, he finds himself in a prison cell at Sivana's hideout, "deep within the solid rock of a huge mountain." There are neither doors or windows in the cell. Billy decides it would be useless to run around the cell, so, finding himself free to speak, he says the magic word "Shazam" and becomes Capt. Marvel. Half an hour later, Cap is still in the cell. "I can't understand it! I've hit that wall with everything I've got and it's still as solid as ever!" Capt. Marvel resolves that he can't escape by force. "I guess I'll have to try something else, this time. Let's see...Hmm, yes, that might be it. Now if I just..."

Meanwhile, Sivana is with Beautia in another section of his underground hideout. He is confronting a group of men he has kidnaped. "There's no use trying to escape," he says, "Because there isn't a single door or window in this whole place. And the only man who could help you is now helpless himself. Hee! Hee! Hee!" "That's what you think, my friend." Capt. Marvel steps through the wall! Sivana is stunned. He dashes through the opposing wall. Capt. Marvel follows. As Capt. Marvel pursues Sivana (literally!) through the mountain, the prisoners locate a radio and send for help. As the militia arrive, Capt. Marvel corners Sivana, who, by this time, is growing fainter. He is transparent as Cap lunges for him. The force of Capt. Marvel's lunge carries him through the mountain, but Sivana is gone! The military search, but there is no trace of him. "I guess he's gone for good this time." Beautia bursts into tears.

Later, at radio station W.H.I.Z., Billy gives his account of the adventure: "Well folks, Sivana's secret was really a cinch for Capt. Marvel's super wisdom to figure out. By calculating the orbits and timing of each electron and each atom in a solid wall, he could time his own atoms to pass between those of the wall like smoke through a screen. Each time however, a slight amount of his own substance got left behind,



Sivana, Sivana Jr., and Georgia

causing the ghost-like after image, and finally, he used himself all up and there was nothing left after that last fatal wall."

Feel sorry for old Sivana? Well don't be, 'cause he was back in the next issue, #15.

In #15, Sivana turns up disguised as an oriental gang leader, "Dr. Footu Yu." There is never an explanation offered as to how he survived the previous adventure (says Billy, at the end of this story: "That's one thing we'll never know). Having tricked Billy into his hideout, Sivana fastens a device to him that prevents him from saying Shazam. "This little device, my young friend, is an ultra-frequency oscillator which is so delicately tuned that as soon as your magic word is pronounced, it immediately cancels it out by interferance. Watch:" Sivana attempts to say Shazam. It is drowned out by "Ozzle Ozzle," from the machine. Having Billy thus helpless, Sivana flys him to his hidden laboratory in the Central American Jungle (yes, he has one there, too!). Sivana indicates a large, dome-like structure. "That, Billy boy, is one of my incubators. I have a dozen of them here." In them, Sivana has reproduced the environment of Venus and is raising Glompers (remember them?). Beautia and Billy are put to work feeding the young Glompers. Beautia warns Billy: "They're all killers at heart. I hate to think of what they'll do when Sivana turns them lose on the world." Although unable to call upon Capt. Marvel, Billy waits for his chance and is finally able to make a break for freedom. He reaches Sivana's plane and (obviously having had flying lessons) takes off. Sivana discovers that Billy's escaped and pursues him in his rocket ship. After an hour long chase, Billy is forced to crash land in the mountains. Billy is lying nearly unconscious, but the crash has damaged the device on his neck. He feebly mutters: "Sh..Shazam." A vengeful Capt. Marvel appears. The rocket ship rams him, but Capt. Marvel doesn't budge. The ship lands and from it emerge Sivana, Beautia, a host of adult Glompers and a giant, Atlas-like young man. "After him, Magnificus!" shouts Sivana. Magnificus hits Capt. Marvel, knocking him over. Capt. Marvel returns the blow. The ensuing battle knocks half the mountain apart. As Capt. Marvel subdues Magnificus, Sivana is struck by a falling boulder and is severely injured. Capt. Marvel loads Sivana, Beautia, Magnificus and the Glompers into the rocket ship and flys them back to Venus. On the way, he asks Beautia to explain who Sivana is and why she and Magnificus (her brother) follow him. She does: "Back during the early part of the century, Sivana was one of the most brilliant and promising young scientists in Europe. Bursting with ideas to improve the lot of mankind and help all the world, Sivana was driven from country to country by men who called his dreams impractical and his science a fake. Finally, penniless and outcast, the broken scientist took his tiny son and daughter and set out in a rocket ship the world had laughed at as another crazy invention. Landing on the planet Venus, the lonely man battled almost overwhelming dangers for long years until his children were grown and the fierce jungles tamed. And so you see him today. Old, his once-magnificent mind warped with dreadful schemes for revenge on a world that would have none of him. Do you wonder?" Capt. Marvel is touched. "Sad!" is his only reply.

It is interesting to note that, in the prelude to the adventure in this issue, we get an interesting insight to Billy Batson/Capt. Marvel. Billy is at home, bored, nothing to do. "Ho-Hum! Eight O'Clock! Wish I had something exciting to do," he says. "Say, I wonder what Beautia is doing tonight?" Billy becomes Capt. Marvel, who doffs his uniform in favor of a dress suit (complete with tuxedo and carnation), and proceeds to sweep Beautia off her feet. "Good evening, Beautia, I thought you might like to step out a bit this evening!" Capt. Marvel was, perhaps, the only comic book super hero who was a swinger!

EPIC BATTLES:

With the advent of Capt. Marvel Adventures #58, someone must have decided that Capt. Marvel would do well with book-length adventures. Many more were done, during the remaining life of the book, and, to my knowledge, every one of them featured Sivana. Most of the stories were uninspired, using the same plot of Sivana travelling through time, trying to foul up history. A few, however, were quite interesting.

In #58, the story concerns Sivana conquering the Earth with peace.

Part One, "Sivana Strikes Again!!" tells of how Sivana invents his "glad hand." He explains to his assistant, Beautia: "See? This gadget generates an electrodynamic force which will make people peaceful when I shake hands with them!" The device fits in the palm of his hand and works like a joy buzzer. The glad hand gets its first test when Sivana is accosted by a gangster, "Butcher Bane:" "I want my pay, ya little rat! Last week ya hired me for a job and didn't pay off." Sivana, determined to neither pay the crook, nor get killed, promises to pay Bane double, and asks him to shake on it. They do, and Bane immediately becomes peaceful and condescending. He refuses Sivana's money and leaves, a new man. Wandering through the streets, he preaches peace and love. Finally, he attempts to kiss a baby, but, because of his rough looks, the child's mother suspects the worst and screams for help. Billy Batson, passing nearby, hears her screams and becomes Capt. Marvel, to investigate. Bane, after being manhandled, manages to explain his change of heart to Capt. Marvel and how he only intended to kiss the baby. "Holy Moley! A reformed crook! But how did this happen?" "Sivana did it!" Sivana, who has been following the criminal to study his behavior, appears. "Yes Capt. Marvel!

MAGNIFICUS

You see, I'm doing good now, not evil! Let's shake on it!" Capt. Marvel hesitates: "No! I won't shake! I don't trust you, Sivana."

Later, Sivana throws a party, inviting all the gang leaders in the city to attend. As each enters, Sivana shakes hands with them and they all become peaceful. Having them thus subdued, he has them all sign their gangs and money over to him. Meanwhile, Billy runs into Beautia in an ice cream parlor. She inadvertantly mentions her father's party to him. Billy changes to Capt. Marvel and crashes the party. The gang leaders, of course, will not fight, since they're now peaceful, so Sivana is cornered. The scientist buys time by throwing a bowl of soup in Cap's face. While Capt. Marvel is confused, Sivana escapes. Capt. Marvel pursues him, but Sivana ducks around a corner and hides in an old ash can. Cap runs past, which brings us to part two, "Sivana's Viewpoint!"

Capt. Marvel, having lost Sivana, deduces that the mad scientist must have retreated to his laboratory. Arriving there, Capt. Marvel decides not to break in, for fear the noise will warn Sivana in time for him to escape again. As an alternative, he decides to change to Billy and crawl through an opening in a window (Capt. Marvel isn't too bright). Sivana is waiting and knocks Billy out with a wrench. As Billy comes to, Sivana clasps his hand, changing him. "Sivana, my friend!" Billy exclaims. "Billy old pal! Listen, Billy, I'm building a machine up on Venus that will shoot its peace ray over the whole world! Come along and see it!" Billy obediently agrees and is soon on Venus. Having seen the machine, Billy makes a broadcast to Earth, telling how wonderful it will be when Sivana establishes lasting peace on Earth. Hearing this, Sivana devises a new scheme for further entrapping Billy: "Billy! The Venusians want you to broadcast the same wonderful message to all of Venus!" "What? But I don't know the Venusian language!" "Oh, that's alright, I can fix that in an instant. Just step into my language lung, Billy. It will teach you the entire Venusian language in ten minutes!" Billy enters the machine and emerges, ten minutes later, speaking fluent Venusian. He gives the broadcast to the Venusians and as he does, as Sivana had anticipated, the effects of the glad hand wear off. Billy, once again mistrustful of Sivana, tries to become Capt. Marvel, but discovers an interesting side effect of the language lung...while it taught him to speak Venusian, it caused him to forget the English language completely. "Shazam" comes out "Shazoogle" in Venusian. Billy can't change.

Sivana, with Capt. Marvel out of the way, turns on his peace ray and rockets back toward Earth. In the meantime, Billy, terribly confused, wanders out of the laboratory and into the Venusian wilderness. Beautia, feeling sorry for him, follows.

At the beginning of part three, "Sivana Rules Earth," we find Sivana landing on Earth to find his ray already taking affect. Everyone has become meek and supplicating. He decides to make a test. He kicks the first person he sees. "Make way, scum! Make way for King Sivana!" "Yes sir! Sorry sir! You're the king, sir! If you say so sir!" Within 24 hours, Sivana has become King of Earth.

Back on Venus, Billy and Beautia, still wandering on the Venusian desert, are suddenly attacked by a Venusian monster. Billy tries to become Capt. Marvel, but once again, all he can manage is "Shazoogle." In desperation, Beautia gives him the correct pronounciation. Magic lightning, and Capt. Marvel appears to vanquish the beast. Beautia runs to him. "Oh, Capt. Marvel, that was magnificent...What? Don't you understand a word of English either?" "Ozzle? Ook De Gook??" Obviously he can't! Beautia takes Cap back to the lab and puts him into the language lung (Sivana told her not to cure Billy. He didn't say anything about Capt. Marvel!). He emerges, ten minutes later, speaking English. Tuning in on a radio broadcast from Earth, he discovers that Sivana has become King.

After smashing the peace machine, he sets out for Earth (Capt. Marvel no longer needs a space ship to fly through space). Meanwhile, back on Earth, Sivana is enjoying himself: "Make it a law that all gold and jewels belong to King Sivana! Make it a law that murder, crime and torture are legal! Make it a law that all policemen be thrown off cliffs!" "Yes, O' King!" "Heh Heh Heh! At last I am the rightful ruler of the universe! I'll do what I please now... and I'll think of the worst things possible! Heh Heh! I think tomorrow I'll order all people with bushy eyebrows to be tortured, just for fun! Heh Heh Heh! And the beauty of it all is that Capt. Marvel can't stop me! Billy Batson is up on Venus right now, unable to speak a word of English! Oh, Heh Heh Heh!" But then! "Guess again!" "G-G-Gulp! Capt. Marvel!" "Your reign of terror is over!" The effects of the smashed peace ray have worn off the people. Angrily, they mob Sivana. Capt. Marvel rescues him from the mob. "Back folks! Mob rule is just as bad as Sivana's rule! He'll go to jail for his deeds!" Sivana had ruled Earth for 37 hours 15 minutes. As a bystander aptly put it: "If he had ruled a week, all civilization would have been ruined!"

In Capt. Marvel #144, another feature length story of note appeared: "The Amazing Story Of The Stolen Shazam Powers."

As the introduction to this adventure, Sivana vows: "World's Mightiest Mortal, eh? Watch me turn him into the World's Biggest Weakling!" To make good his vow, Sivana, in his space ship, journeys to the Rock of Eternity in an attempt to kidnap Shazam.

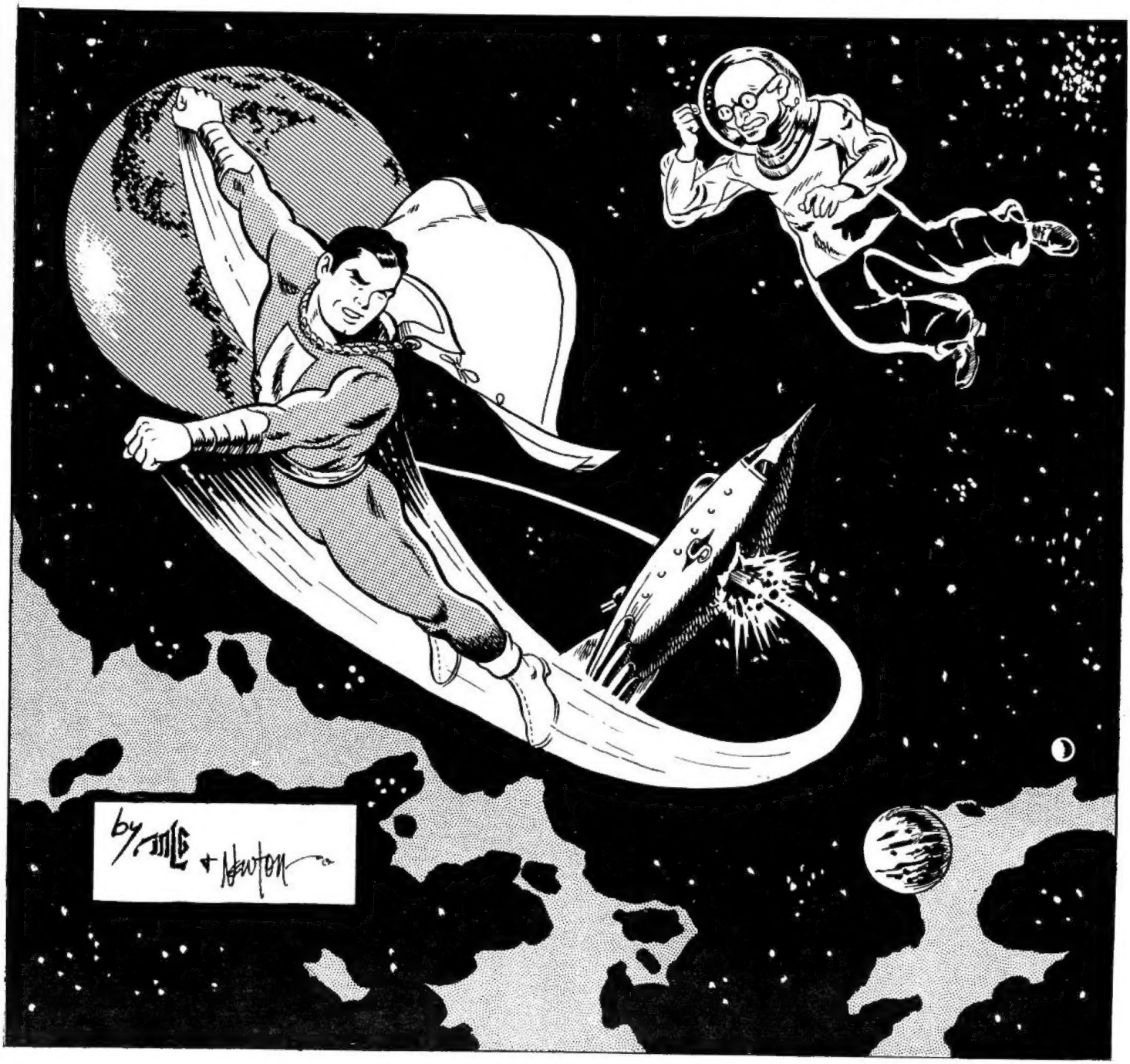
For those not in the know, the Rock of Eternity is located in the very center of our universe. From it, a traveller can journey to any location in time or space. Old Shazam (billed as "Guardian of the Cosmos") resides there, along with his six consorts, Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles, and Mercury, the ancient heroes from whom Capt. Marvel derives his powers.

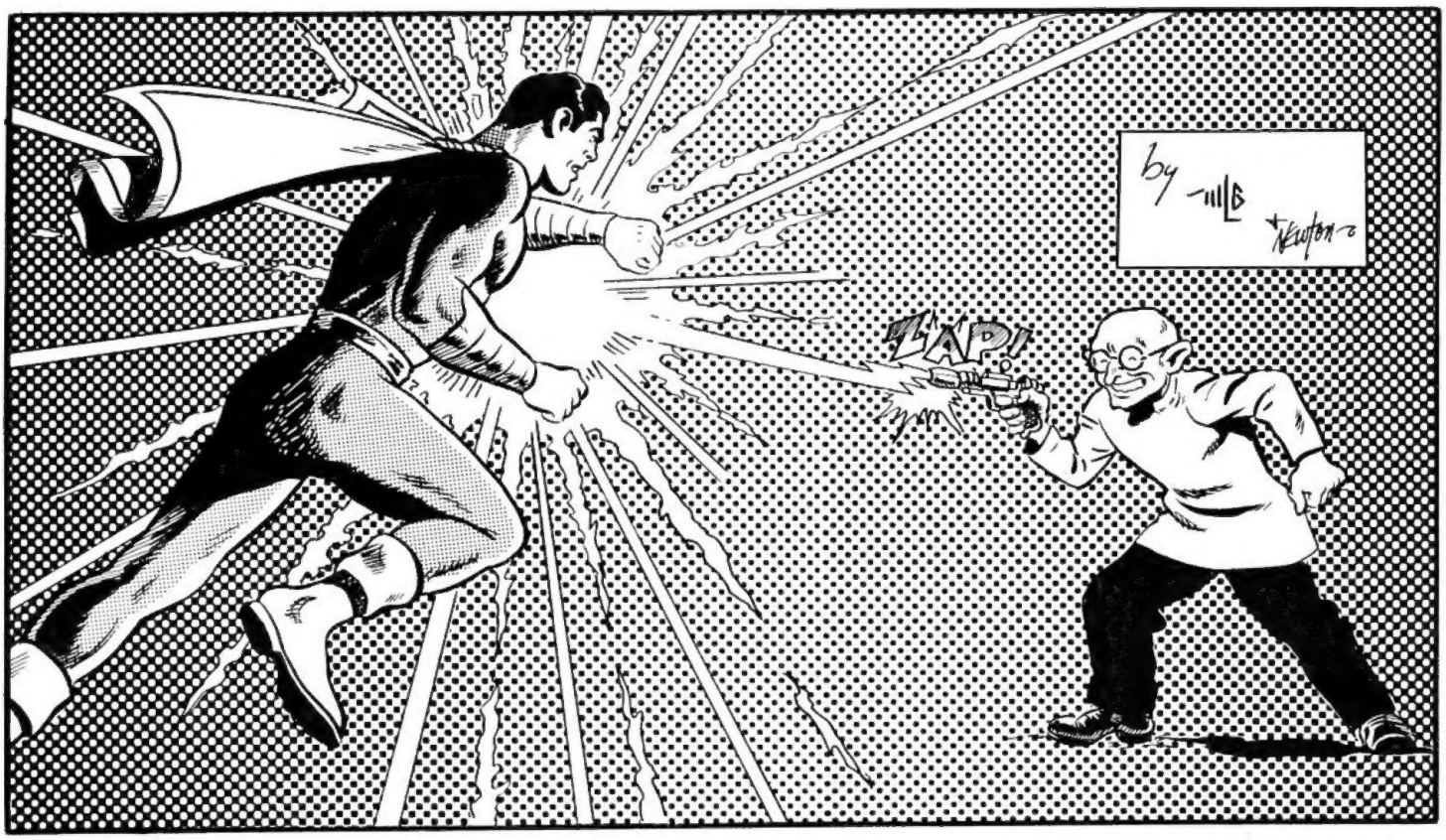
Sivana has discovered that Shazam wears a "robe of immortality" that protects him from death and injury. Without it, having given his powers to Capt. Marvel, he is helpless. That night, as Shazam sleeps (without his robe), Sivana captures him. The following morning, Sivana appears before the six immortals holding Shazam at knife point. "You're all going to obey me, or this knife does its work! Understand?"

Sivana first has Solomon withdraw his power of wisdom from Capt. Marvel. This is accomplished by scratching his name from a plaque bearing the magic word, which hangs in Shazam's palace. Sivana takes Shazam back to Earth, warning the immortals to keep in touch by radio and take commands, or the old wizard dies! As they leave, Shazam prophesies: "Yes, dire days lie ahead for planet Earth, as this evil soul has his way with us! But obey Sivana in all things. Not to save my paltry life, for which I care nothing, but because it is written that Sivana will win out against Capt. Marvel! Fate so decrees!"

When Sivana lands on Earth, he sends an ultimatum to the U.N. It is read before a delegation: "From the Sivana fortress, I, King Sivana, demand that the United Nations disband! I will now rule Earth from my impregnable fortress! None of your armies will be able to smash or even dent it! From it I will pour a rain of destruction all over Earth unless I am crowned king! I have spoken! P.S. And not even Capt. Marvel can wreck my fortress. I'll even tell him where it is..by code..if he can solve it!" There follows a simple looking code. Well, we already know what Sivana does when he is crowned king! So Capt. Marvel is summoned to break the code. However, robbed of Solomon's wisdom, he is unable to do so. Taunting him further, Sivana sends Cap a map, giving exact instructions on how to find his fortress, located in the "Inferno Desert."

As Capt. Marvel speeds toward Sivana's fortress, Sivana has Hercules cross his name from the list. Capt. Marvel hits the fortress wall at full speed and bounces off. Again he tries and again he's unsuccessful. "First my wisdom, now my strength, what goes on?" Undaunted, he calls upon Atlas' power of stamina and, with a pick begins chipping away at the fort. But he collapses with fatigue as that power, too, is removed. Zeus is then ordered to withdraw Capt. Marvel's power of invulnerability. Sivana knocks Cap out with a stone. The wicket old scientist sneaks toward Cap with knife in hand, but stops when he decides to have more fun with him. Sivana revives him. Capt. Marvel, though weak, is still willing to fight. He chases Sivana back into his fortress. As he bears down upon the scientist, Achilles is ordered to take his power of courage from the list. Capt. Marvel becomes a pitiful coward and flees from Sivana. As Marvel tries to fly away, Mercury is ordered to withdraw his one remaining power, that of speed and flight. He crashes back to earth, where Sivana catches him and ties him up. Sivana brings out Shazam, "Now I'm going to stake you both out under the hot sun to <u>die</u>!" Without Capt. Marvel to stand in his way, Sivana sets about, once again, to conquer the Earth. After countries are brutally bombarded by Sivana's rays and rockets, the U.N. is forced to come to terms. They start drawing up surrender papers. Back on the desert, Capt. Marvel has become delirious from the heat. He mutters Shazam





and Billy Batson appears. Billy finds that the ropes that held Capt. Marvel are loose on him. He slips out of them and unties Shazam. Leaving Shazam in the shade to rest, he goes to retrieve the robe of immortality. Sivana has absent mindedly left the door to his fortress open, so Billy surprises him when he walks in. Sivana comes at him with a knife, but Billy manages a lucky punch and downs the scientist. Billy locates the robe and, eluding Sivana, returns it to old Shazam. "Saved! And now, with my life no longer in danger, I can send a telepathic call to the Rock of Eternity!" He has the immortals restore their powers to the plaque. "Now my son, speak my name!" Billy does, and Capt. Marvel returns, once more the World's Mightiest Man. Streaking toward the fortress, Capt. Marvel destroys it (in one panel!!). Sivana is found amid the wreckage. He confronts old Shazam. "You told me that I would succeed against Capt. Marvel, you dirty old liar!" "Harken Sivana! I did not lie! You did succeed against Capt. Marvel, as I prophesied! You robbed him of all his powers and had him at your mercy! But your downfall was Billy Batson!"

The last issue of Capt. Marvel, #150, contained an interesting feature lengther, "The World of Too Many Sivanas."

The begining of chapter one, "I Conquer Africa," finds Sivana in the jungles of Africa (where else?), searching for a rare mineral. Having had no luck, he angrily kicks a rock. Here, the narrative is taken up by Sivana, giving his own account of the tale: "But that stone I kicked loose! Wild hope once more warmed my poor suffering heart!" As it turns out, that stone is the very thing Sivana was searching for. An unknown mineral, emanating very special radioactive rays. He names it Sivanium. He then draws up a new plan to conquer Earth, in four easy steps. One: Enslave natives to dig ore; two: Keep Capt. Marvel away; three: Enslave human race; four: Enslave Capt. Marvel. He has no difficulty executing step one. Of course as soon as Billy Batson learns that the African region known as Zubula has been enslaved he changes to Capt. Marvel, who speeds to free them. As Capt. Marvel speeds along, he gets the world's mightiest shock. Sivana has mined Zubula with bombs equipped with Marvel Proximity Fuses! The bombs instantly detonate when Capt. Marvel comes within a mile of them. The natives will be destroyed if Cap gets any closer. He is forced to turn back.

As chapter two, "I Conquer Billy Batson!" begins, Capt. Marvel changes to Billy and enters Zubula, as he has no effect on the bombs. Billy enters Sivana's hut/lab, finding Sivana sleeping but protected by photo-electric beams. Searching the hut, he finds Sivana's list of four steps to world domination, noting that steps one and two have been accomplished. Next to the list, labeled step three, is the "Sivanium Molecular Rearranger," and, labeled step four, the blueprint for enslaving Capt. Marvel. Billy, not having the wisdom of Solomon, however, can understand neither of them. Searching further, he locates a map, showing the locations of the Marvel Bombs. He takes it and sets out to dig them up. However, the noise of taking it down awakens Sivana. As Billy locates the first bomb, Sivana sneaks up and knocks him down. "Now I'll knock you silly, brat! Why don't you yell Shazam and let Capt. Marvel beat me up? Hehhh!" "You know I can't Sivana! Not with those bombs still buried!" Billy is knocked out. When he comes to, he finds himself tied up, but without the usual gag. Sivana comes at him with a knife (again!), taunting him. "I was in no hurry! It was exquisite ecstasy to make that boy squirm and die a million deaths in advance! And when he did die, I would be King of Earth! Now hurry and read chapter three of my story!"

Chapter three is titled "I Conquer Capt. Marvel!" and as it begins, we pick up Sivana's narrative again: "Billy almost yearned for a quick death that would end his tormenting dilemma! But I withdrew the knife and had more gay fun with him! Good sport that I am, I gave him a fair and square deal!" The fair deal turns out to be that Billy gets to choose his own way of dying. Sivana offers him a choise between being boiled in oil, torn apart by a wild buffalo, squashed by an elephant, mangled by a gorilla, or buried alive! "But then, tiring of this innocent fun, I pulled my big surprise on Billy!" Sivana lets Billy live, imprisoning him in a giant bell jar. "You must live! Why, I'd kill anyone who harmed a hair of your head! Because you see, I need Capt. Marvel later! The Sivanium machine will make him my slave!" Finally "S-Day" arrives. Sivana has isolated enough Sivanium and, with his machine, rockets toward the nearest big city in Africa. Billy, meanwhile, frees himself from the glass jar by rhythmically beating it with a spoon. The vibrations shatter the glass. Reaching the Zubulan border, he again becomes Capt. Marvel and sets out after Sivana.

In the city, Sivana has already turned on his machine. When Capt. Marvel attempts to capture him, Sivana runs into a crowd of people. Cap is too stunned to give further chase, as the crowd and everyone else in the city, now look like Sivana! "Thus I easily slipped back to my ship, and left only a mocking note: 'Get it, idiot? The Sivanium machine is a molecular rearranger, able swiftly and painlessly to change the human head! Charged with Sivanium ions, the ray caused all their heads to change to mine! Now they not only look like me but think like me! What bet-

ter, than for me to rule a world of Sivanas? Heh Heh!" The natives begin manhandling Capt. Marvel, but he easily escapes them and pursues Sivana back to Zubula, where he must become Billy Batson again. There, Billy, once again, attempts to deactivate the Marvel Bombs. Again, Sivana is watching, but this time lets him succeed. Billy says his word. "As usual, the magic bolt came down! But its course was not quite as usual! It veered away from Billy and zoomed down into my Marvel machine. It zipped right through the machine, picking up a vital property! Then that new bolt, Shazam lightning plus Sivanium, finished its job of changing Billy into Capt. Marvel! But a new and wonderful Capt. Marvel! Hehhh!" Capt. Marvel now looks and thinks like Sivana!

In chapter four, "I Conquer the World!" though, we find that Sivana has made a slight miscalculation. Since Capt. Marvel now thinks like Sivana, and since he is the World's Mightiest Mortal, he decides to become King of Earth himself! He locks Sivana up, planning to execute him later, and sets about to build his palace. Sivana manages to escape, however, and journeys to the Rock of Eternity to consult old Shazam. There, he pleads with Shazam to change Marvel back to Billy. Shazam agrees, but warns Sivana not to harm Billy, under severe penalty. Sivana agrees, and so Capt. Marvel is changed back. Sivana then begins taking over in earnest, since Billy cannot again become the evil Capt. Marvel. "I figured Billy was all washed up then, and I stopped watching him! Unknown to me, the kid still had a desperate plan in mind!" Billy journeys to the Hall of Shazam, in the old subway tunnel where he first became Capt. Marvel. He calls down Shazam's spirit by lighting a mystic brazier. "Since I cannot call on Capt. Marvel, please send the ancient gods themselves to help me, sire!" The gods appear and waste no time in destroying Sivana's machine. Billy then becomes the true Capt. Marvel and wastes no time in capturing Sivana and putting him behind bars. "Somehow it always ends this way! Curses curses curses!"

THE INANE BATTLES:

In his continuing efforts to subdue Capt. Marvel, Sivana often carried his methods to an extreme. Most adventures of this type were extremely funny.

SHAZAM

One such adventure appeared in Capt. Marvel #56 and was titled "Capt. Marvel Goes Crazy!" As this story begins, Capt. Marvel is approached by a group of scientists. Their museum has completed a display of models on the development of man, from ape-man on. All they need is modern man. Since Capt. Marvel represents the greatest of human development, they want him to model for the statue. Cap agrees and undergoes x-rays and extensive physical measurements, including a plaster cast of his body! By the time the scientists are finished, it is a harried Capt. Marvel they leave behind. Shortly, another one enters. "No no! Not another one! I can't stand it! I'm going crazy!" "Crazy? How interesting! You've been measured inside and out, physically. But I'm a psychologist. I'm here to examine your mind." Capt. Marvel is too upset to notice the the psychologist is really Dr. Sivana in disguise. Sivana has a new plan for Capt. Marvel's downfall. When Sivana's tests are over, he announces to Capt. Marvel that he's shown definite signs of insanity. Angered, Capt. Marvel throws him out. "Crazy am I? Crazy as a fox! I'll look the door, and then can any more of them come in? Ha ha ha ha! Holy Moley! I better get ahold of myself! I'm acting a bit-er-nutty at that!"

Meanwhile, Sivana sets out to prove that the World's Mightiest Mortal is the World's Mightiest Crackpot! Having convinced the head of the Board of Mental Health that Capt. Marvel should be tested further, the board arranges to make a test with a disguised Sivana asking the questions. Sivana proceeds to cross-examine Cap with incriminating questions, such as: "Have you stopped beating little children? Answer yes or no!" Capt. Marvel comes out sounding like a nut, again. The final proof of Cap's insanity comes when Sivana slips itching powder down Capt. Marvel's back. While trying to answer questions, he begins scratching violently. The head of the board tells Cap that he's committing him to an asylum! "Whaaaat? Why that's fantastic! Impossible! I'm no more crazy than you are, sir!" "Heh heh! That's what they all say!" Capt. Marvel is taken to the asylum. Since he was legally committed, he can't break out. But Billy can, so he changes and heads back toward the museum. When he arrives, he finds Sivana there, still gloating. Billy is obviously sharper than Capt. Marvel, as he penetrates the disguise immediately: "That laugh! So, under that false beard you're Sivana! Shazam!" Capt. Marvel appears. Under duress, Sivana confesses all, and his schemes are once again brought to an end.

In "The Laugh Lotion," in Whiz #68, Sivana again disguises himself. This time as an insect exterminator. Entering Station W.H.I.Z., he approaches Sterling Morris for a job. Morris, recalling that there are ants in studio B, where Billy broadcasts, sends him there. Sivana goes right to work. After his broadcast, Billy approaches the disguised Sivana, "Is that stuff any good? Will it take care of ants?" "I don't know about the ants, but it'll take care of you, you insect! Heh heh heh!" Sivana sprays Billy with the gas, then he unmasks, drawing a revolver. He explains that Billy has just been sprayed with his newest invention, Laugh Lotion. Billy is overcome by laughter: "He's going to kill me! Haw haw haw! He'll blow my brains out! Ho ho ho! This is awful! Hee hee hee!"

Sivana's downfall is, however, procrastination. Trying to savour the moment as long as possible, he waits until Billy finally manages to say his word between gusts of laughter. Capt. Marvel appears, but he also gets a dose of Laugh Lotion and begins laughing uncontrollably. He tries to nab Sivana, but is too weak from laughter. Sivana escapes.

Having had his fill of looting stores, Sivana decides to phone the now recovered Capt. Marvel: "Greetings Capt. Marvel! Come down to Police Headquarters and watch me kick the chief of police in the teeth! I'll be expecting you! Heh heh!" When Cap arrives at the police station, Sivana has already subdued everyone there with Laugh Lotion. He kicks the chief in the teeth as Cap enters. "Capt. Marvel! Did you see it? Now I'll spray you too with the Laugh Lotion!" "Yes, but I'm hoding my dose!" Capt. Marvel knocks Sivana down and crushes his sprayer. Thinking all is safe, he breathes deeply, but Sivana reveals a spare sprayer and lets him have it. He escapes, with Capt. Marvel caught in another paroxysm of laughter. Capt. Marvel recovers soon and begins tracking the scientist by following the trail of his laughing victims. Sivana waits in his lab with three drums of Laugh Lotion he has stored there. He expects Capt. Marvel and is waiting for him with a full sprayer. Capt. Marvel enters, but wearing a gas mask! He, being immune to the gas now, begins spilling Sivana's supply! The wicked old scientist tries to run, but is hit by some of his own concoction. Capt. Marvel catches him. "Ha ha ha! Ho ho ho! Heh heh heh! Haw haw! He's beating me up!

Hee hee! He's taking me to jail! Ho ho haw haw! My plans are ruined! Oh Ha Haaaaa!"

Afterwards, Billy makes his regular broadcast: "So Sivana went behind bars at last! Ha Ha Ha! And it's not the laugh lotion making me laugh this time!"

As I'm writing this, D.C.'s "Shazam" #1 has just hit the stands. I won't bother describing it, as I'm sure almost all of you have read it by now. I thought the story in the first issue could've been better, but I'll not go into that either. It does seem fitting to me, that they revived Capt. Marvel's arch-enemy in the same issue and story that they revived him.

Capt. Marvel and Dr. Thaddeus Bodog Sivana. They've been enemies for 33 years. May they be so for 33 more!

Art for this article was done by: Don Newton, John Clark, Martin L. Greim and C.C. BECK.

All characters are © National Periodical Pub. 1973.

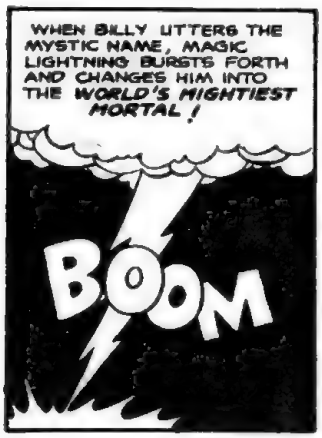
From one of the oldest Comic Book clashes to one of the newest! The second in Comic Crusader's new series "Great Comic Book Clashes" features the cosmic battle between NEW GENESIS and APOKOLIPS. This article will be written by Kirby aficionado Bob Cosgrove, and will delve into the classic symbolic aspects of the cosmic struggle between good and evil as interpreted by Jack Kirby. This article will also feature the drawing you thought you'd never see...Orion vs. Darkseid by Jack Kirby.

Martin L. Greim

JOURNEY TO THE ROCK OF ETERNITY

by BOB COSGROVE

Otto & Jack Binder



Few comic creators have been the subject of as many articles and features as Jack and Otto Binder. And little wonder. First working with Harry Chesler, and then managing his own shop, Jack Binder oversaw the production of a massive amount of comic book art, as well as personally illustrating many features, most notably Mary Marvel. Most famous for his many Capt. Marvel stories, Otto Binder also scripted for Timely, National, and just about every other company in the business, as well as maintaining a prodigious output as a science fiction writer.

You can't imagine how delighted I was when Martin Greim suggested that he, Al Bradford, and I travel to upper state New York to visit the famous pair, who live only minutes apart. My enthusiasm died a bit when I learned we were going in Al Bradford's van. I was unable to decide whether the name "Dodge," emblazoned on the vehicles front, was a trade name or advice to pedestrians. Playing on my indecision, my fellow fans seized me by the cape-side and hurled me into the van. We were off!

We left in the morning light of Massachusetts and arrived at Otto Binder's home in the bright afternoon sunlight around two. Surpressing our disappointment at not finding at least a yellow lightning insignia on the mail box, we introduced ourselves to Mr. Binder, and his gracious wife. Otto is a short, portly man, with greying hair and a pencil line moustache. Eager for news of the comic industry, he leans forward during conversations, anxious to capture each word, punctuating his comments with short, animated hand movements.

As time was short, we went immediately to Jack Binder's nearby home. On the way, I quizzed Otto concerning his reading habits, hoping to take his mind off Al's driving. Otto said that he read mostly mystery and science fiction, favoring Robert Heinlein as the top sf writer. At that point, the van pulled into Jack's.

While we waited for the second Binder, Otto invited us to the barn out back to see the studio and workshop that Jack uses to create the realistic figures and regalia used in the nearby historical museum, Fort William Henry. Otto led us up a narrow wooden staircase to Jack's studio loft, a small well-lit room, containing painting materials and sketch books. Resting here and there throughout the studio were pieces from synthetic Binder models...a hand here, a soldier's head there. At this point Jack joined us and invited us into his home. After introducing us to his wife, Olga, Binder bade us be seated in the living room. Pictures, large oil paintings, adorned the walls.

Jack Binder, in snow-white hair and black, thick framed glasses, is about the same height as his brother. He is an abrupt, dynamic man, who several times in the course of our conversations expressed his appreciation of Jim Steranko. This was not surprising. In attitude and demeanor, he might have been Jim Steranko forty years later, a Steranko of the golden age of comics. Informed of a colleagues departure from National, Binder waved his hand, impersonaly remarking, "I don't blame him a bit. They're impossible to work for. I never worked for anyone on any terms but my own!" For a moment, Binder's figure dissolved, and I saw the figure of Jim Steranko, sitting on my hotel bed at a New York con, telling a jammed room that "if a publisher wants me, he's got to meet my terms."

INTERVIEW:

Bob: Jack, as I understand it, one of your first jobs in the comic industry was as "shop" foreman for The Harry Chesler Studio. Could you tell us something of Chesler himself? He's sort of an unknown figure to many fans.

Jack: Well, my first impression of Harry Chesler, when I went down with Frank Gruber, who was then scripting western tales for him, to get the job, wasn't a good one. I didn't like the looks of the shop and turned him down. I went back a year later and Harry and I sat down for about an hour or so and talked. He said, "I don't want you as an artist!" And I said, "Then what the hell do you want?" He then told me he wanted me to take charge, to take over the staff. I said, "OK, fine!" and that was all there was to it.

The background of Harry Chesler is simply this...he was a man who was a visionary...a promoter...full of ideas and still is to this day. He has a natural in-

tuitive sense, to know when an artist has done his best. I've seen him have an artist do over a job 15 times. He'd pay for it, but he'd know the artist was doing his best work. He knew what he wanted and he'd get it!

Harry was originally sponsored by Benard McFadden, in our first studio on 5th Avenue. Then there was some confusion between Harry and McFadden and the shop broke up. I went on my own for a while, then several months later, Harry called me up and we started up a new organization. I think three times we sort of went off the deep end; primarily because Harry could always envision something different, something new and he'd spend his last cent on it. He always had confidence that we could make it and we did. Harry loved human beings. He was like a father to everybody.

Otto: Harry was a showman; he often did bizarre things, simply for the effect. He had pet aligators, little ones, in his office and would feed them raw hamburger. He also served them minnows, but he would chop their heads off first, so the minnows wouldn't suffer when the aligators ate them.

Marty: Of the many things connected with Capt. Marvel, one of the more interesting is Shazam's "Rock of Eternity." Can you tell us something about this, Otto?

Otto: I'm fairly certain that the Rock of Eternity was my idea. I seem to remember coming up with the plot all enthused, and Wendell Crowley was too when he heard it. It actually ties in scientifically with astronomical theory. As you know, according to the "big bang" theory, there was once a "primal atom" of super-condensed matter which exploded some 15 billion years ago or so. These particles then scattered to form the nebulas, etc. Now along with this "point" in space, there was a "point in time" too at that very spot, wherever it was. Using poetic (literary) license, I simply postulated a fixed point in the universe where this primal atom existed in a timeless state before it exploded. The rock angle was just to make it pictorial. But conceivably, there is some temporal/spacial point from which any portion of the universe, throughout time, can be reached. If you understand all this, tell me how it works, will you!

Bob: Jack, could you describe what your typical work day was like when you were running your own shop?

Jack: It was 24 hours a day. Otto: It started with him going crazy and how did it end up? Jack: Well, I wound up crazier! I hired in units of four. I'd get enough work to near work the men I had to death and when I had enough work for four more men I'd hire them. So those four were kept busy and my original crew was kept busy too. I always had enough work, because I got the business first.

Bob: What about your work day Otto?

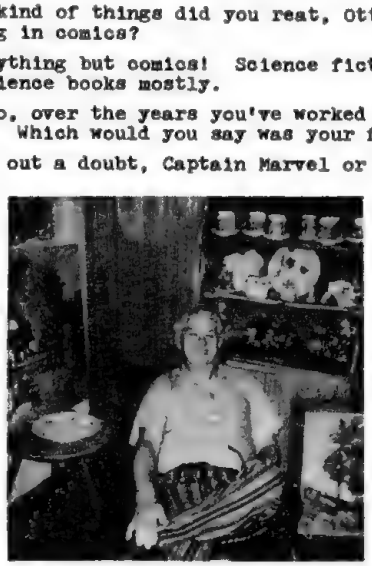
Otto: Well, as you know, a writer works alone. I'm a morning writer. I'd get going at 9 o'clock and work until I was groggy, which usually came about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The rest of the day I'd take off to recover.

Bob: What kind of things did you read, Otto, when you were working in comics?

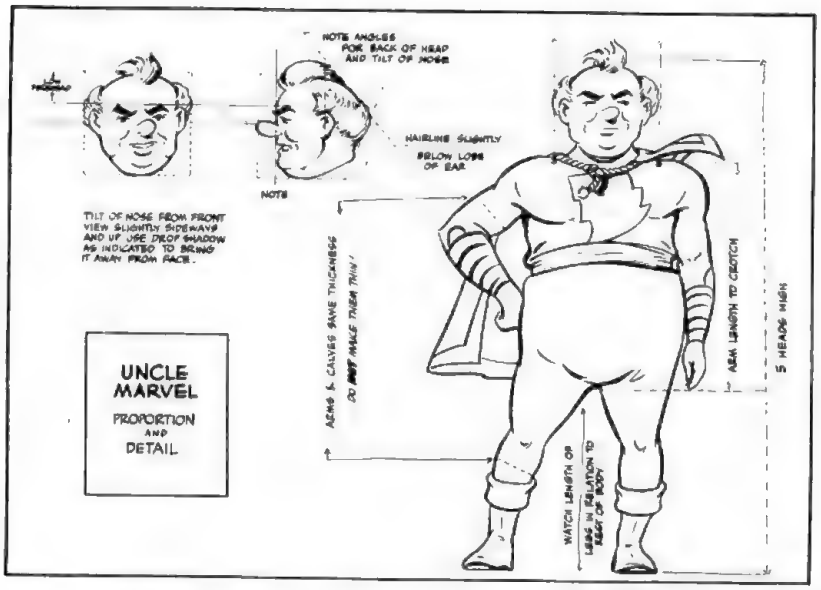
Otto: Everything but comics! Science fiction, detective and science books mostly.

Marty: Otto, over the years you've worked on many characters. Which would you say was your favorite?

Otto: With out a doubt, Captain Marvel or any of the



(JACK BINDER)


NOTE ANGLES FOR BACK OF HEAD AND TILT OF NOSE
HAIRLINE SLIGHTLY BELOW LOBE OF EAR
NOTE
TILT OF NOSE FROM FRONT VIEW SLIGHTLY SIDEWAYS AND UP USE DROP SHADOW AS INDICATED TO BRING IT AWAY FROM FACE.
UNCLE MARVEL
PROPORTION AND DETAIL
ARMS & CALVES HAVE THICKNESS DO NOT MAKE THEM THIN!
ARM LENGTH TO CROTCH
5 HEADS HIGH
WATCH LENGTH OF LEGS IN RELATION TO REST OF BODY

THIS PLATE PREPARED BY JACK BINDER

(UNPUBLISHED MODEL SHEET, DRAWN BY JACK BINDER, USED AS A GUIDE FOR OTHER ARTISTS WORKING ON THE CHARACTER.)

Marvel Family! Other than them, I'd say Captain America was one. He was always a free and easy character. I did scripts directly for Stan Lee, in those days. I didn't work with Joe Simon until years later, when he worked for Harvey Publications.

Bob: Marty's been working on a Capt. Marvel Jr. vs. Capt. Nazi article. Do you know who created Capt. Nazi?

Otto: Yes, it was Ed Herron. Herron was a very good writer and I think he created Captain America too. At the time he worked for Fawcett, he couldn't admit to it, because he wasn't supposed to work for any other company.

Marty: Otto, which did you find it easier to write... a super hero story, a science fiction story, or a detective story?

Otto: I think, probably, the science fiction stories. I liked doing things for the EC comics.

Bob: What did an artist have to be able to do for your shop?

Jack: The most important thing for an artist in the comic book field to know is, how to utilize the full page, with the number of break downs on that page, to consistantly have a continuity and a flow of story. Knowing how to interpret a script is another important thing. There was a panel once, that really had the boys puzzled. The script said, "show the hero and the girl standing on the shore at the beach, with the waves thundering in, and in the background show 10,000 natives coming at them throwing spears." They finally decided to see me about this problem of how to draw all that. I said, "Well getting to this point is very simple. Just show a close up of the hero, with his arm around the girl, pointing at the reader saying, 'Look at those 10,000 natives coming at us! This is the end!"

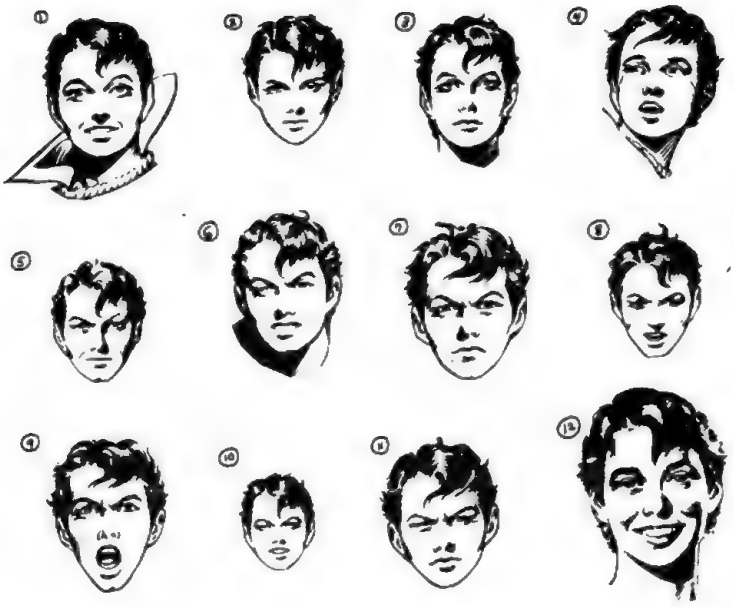
Marty: As an artist yourself, Jack, how many pages of artwork did you turn out a day?

Jack: Two complete saleable pages a day. "Look, see, think, do" is my motto. My advice to anyone learning art is to learn mechanical drawing, pattern of line development and design. Then, from there on, if they have any artistic talent let it express itself. You've got to have complete involvement in what you're doing ...just give yourself to it, or it won't happen.

Bob: Do you remember how you felt, when you got the word that Captain Marvel was dead and that the Fawcett line was no longer in the comic book business?

Jack: It didn't bother me a bit! I knew the end was near and I'd made arangements to go into another line of business.

Otto: Jack's case was different, because he was branching out into other lines of business; but in my case, my whole living was practically Fawcett Comics. I had quit DC because of the Fawcett/National lawsuit, so when National finally won the suit, it came as a big blow to me and the other artists and writers concerned. The thing that made it even worse, was that Beck and I had a syndicated Captain Marvel strip all worked out.



(UNPUBLISHED MAC RABOY MODEL SHEET USED TO AID OTHER ARTISTS IN DRAWING CAPT. MARVEL JR.'S FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.)

He even did some artwork on it. I think we had about 6 or 8 weeks of it done.

Bob: What about your brief venture with Milson Publications, Otto, and the character "Fatman the Human Flying Saucer?"

Otto: That was a big fiasco of course! Fatman, well I don't know. There, Beck and I couldn't see eye to eye. His idea of the character and mine were just so different, that I don't even know how to describe it. I had to re-write stories and Wendell Crowley, who also worked at Milson, had to re-write stories. We just never could get together on the character.

*NOTES ON FATMAN:
Fatman came into being in 1967. He was a hero with three identities...(1) Van Crawford, a wealthy hobbyist; (2) Fatman, the green and yellow clad heavyweight hero; and (3) Saucerman, the human machine. Due to an amazing bio-genetic serum, given to him by a little green alien from outer space, Fatman possessed the power to change at will into a human flying saucer. Fatman was no slouch in human form either. He was tremendously strong and was a master of karate!

Bob: Another Milson book, which never came out, was to be called "Captain Shazam!" Can you tell us a bit about it?

Otto: Capt. Shazam? Well, sorry to disapoint you, but I don't really remember much about him. He was completely different from Capt. Marvel, of course; had to be, for obvious legal reasons. If I recall, I did some story outlines, which I no longer have, but that's as far as it got.

Bob: What are your reactions on the newly returned Captain Marvel?

Jack: I'll give you my reactions on what has already died once. We tried a revival with Little Nemo. I spent thousands of dollars on Bob McCay, Windsor McCay's son, who had his father's technique down to perfection, but lacked the imagination and vitality to get it across. I talked Street and Smith into publishing it, did a few layouts for Bob McCay, and Otto even did a few scripts for it; but when Windsor McCay died, Little Nemo died with him! It's almost impossible to revive something and get the same life and dynamism into it that the original had. Now Beck, on the revived Captain Marvel, retained his technique, but because he's so far away from the original inspiration, the book just isn't the same. In the old days this was part of our life. With these characters, we put heart and soul into them. I put my staff through a regular training course on how to interpret a script. You had to believe you are this character. Although I had 40 people working on one script, in every possible area, the whole thing had to tie together just as it does in the movies.

Otto: We had regular "bull sessions" in those days. We could talk for hours about comics. In fact, we met for weekends for six years, just talking shop. Even though the meetings were social, the conversations always centered around work. We lived it!

Jack: Our instance in the so called "Golden Age" of comics, was a period of time similar to the early movies. No one knew what they were doing. We had to just take the bull by the horns and make this thing go! There were no guide lines set for us to go by. Fortunately, because of the thrill of just doing it and being involved in it, the comics worked.

Bob: Otto, do you think today's Captain Marvel stands a chance of selling today, or do you think he's basically a "1940's" character?

Otto: I wonder. I just don't know. It's just so light and whimsical. It just doesn't seem to be the real Captain Marvel. The artwork yes, because it's Beck, but the stories just don't have the flavor I felt in the old days. As Steranko said in his "History of the Comics"..."The Magic Is Gone!"

Marty: Otto, when you sat down to write the Marvel Family stories, did you first plan out how much action would be given to each member? Did Capt. Marvel get the best treatment?

Otto: The stories were tailored to give them all equal exposure. Sometimes one of the Marvels would get a bit more of the action, but the formula was to send each one of them out on a separate mission and bring them together for a big ending.

Bob: You are perhaps best remembered Jack, for Mary Marvel. Will you tell us a bit about your work on her?

Jack: I had nothing to do with creating Mary Marvel, except that after I got a hold of the character, I made it my personality. Her character had been already set before I got to her.

Otto: I wrote the first story that she appeared in. That was in Captain Marvel #18. She then had her own lead feature in Wow Comics, beginning with issue #9. (November, 1942)

Jack: I'll take credit for Freckles Marvel and Uncle Marvel, not as creations, but as persons. When the script was given to me, I created the personality of Uncle Marvel. (At this point, Jack showed us a model sheet he'd done for Uncle Marvel and this prompted Otto to ask a question that had been in the back of his mind for years.)

Otto: Jack, did you model Uncle Marvel after me?

Jack: Not consciously Otto. Actually, I modelled him after what I wanted to be--what we'd all like to be - the lovable old fraud who gets away with everything.

*NOTES ON UNCLE MARVEL:
Uncle Marvel made his first appearance in a Mary Marvel story in Wow Comics #18, October, 1943. He had no Shazam powers, but found Mary's lost diary, recounting her adventures and tried to pull off a complicated swindle. He claimed to be Mary's uncle and as he and Mary said Shazam together, he doffed his suit of breakaway clothes with a pull of his zipper. He then stood revealed in a makeshift Captain Marvel suit. Uncle Dudley (as was his real name) planned to form Shazam Inc. and sell the services of Mary and the other Marvels. Mary discovered that Dudley was a fraud, when he said Shazam aloud and didn't change. However, when Uncle Marvel risked his life to push a child out of the way of an oncoming truck, Mary decided to humor him. She talked Dudley into making Shazam Inc. a non-profit organization and as a result, Uncle Marvel was around, on and off, as a supporting character in the Marvel stories for a long time.

(OTTO BINDER)

(THE BROTHERS BINDER)

*NOTES ON FRECKLES MARVEL

Freckles was Mary's girl friend and although she didn't pretend to have any powers, like Uncle Dudley did, she still dressed up like Mary Marvel and participated in Mary's adventures now and then.

Marty: Will you tell us something about how Mary Marvel was used to sell girl's dresses?

Jack: Sterling Advertising and another company wanted to use Mary Marvel to sell dresses. They gave me the assignment of doing the first ad. Of course, I did it in my usual simple direct way. The agency had a young art director there who wanted 99 changes made. I told him, "Look, I presented a sketch to you, you okay'd the sketch and I have the layout. I have presented you with the final work. This is it! There will be no more changes, from here on!" He gave me quite a talking to, but I told him he could take it or leave it. So they ran the ad, the way I did it, and they sold 30,000 dresses, from $2.98 to $3.98 a piece. Of course I did the ads after that. When they tried to analyze the success of that first ad, I told them that to the kids, Mary Marvel was a real character. They related to her. They were a part of Mary Marvel and Mary Marvel was a part of them. So when they saw her in those pretty dresses, they bought them to be like her.

Marty: In addition to creating Mary Marvel for Fawcett, didn't you create Supergirl for National too, Otto?

Otto: Yes, along with Mort Weisinger. He was really an idea man. Most editor's aren't, you know.

Marty: How did you feel about writing Supergirl, after having worked on Mary Marvel?

Otto: It was kind of wierd, in a way. I had worked for DC for a while, but stopped when the National/ Fawcett lawsuit took place. I was asked to come back, if and when Capt. Marvel fell by the wayside. I did just that, when National won the suit. Mort kept poo-pooing Capt. Marvel, saying it was a bunch of junk. Mary Marvel was a crazy idea! So, a couple of years went by and one day Mort said to me, "I've got a great idea!...Supergirl!" Of course I didn't say, "You don't mean Mary Marvel do you Mort?" To me, it was like reliving the past.

Marty: Otto, what do you think about the trend toward relevancy in comics?

Otto: My thought is, that comics are escape literature and that they should be kept in that never-never land, disconected with the problems of everyday life.

(JACK BINDER, MARTIN GREIM, AND OTTO BINDER IN FRONT OF JACK'S BARN STUDIO.)

Bob: Jack, what do you think of the artwork in comics today?

Jack: I think that they are over embellished. They're over drawn. They seem to think that the fineness of the comic art carries the comic story. It doesn't! The artwork on today's strips is just too complex. There's just too much there, for the simple thing you want to say.

At this point, it was time for a break! As Jack served coffee and cookies, we talked about some of the artists of the forties. Otto said:

"I always considered C.C. Beck a sort of minor genius. It's a shame he never received more recognition. He sat down and worked out his own, unique approach to comic art and story telling. But he was a unique figure in many other ways too. For example, he would create his own musical instruments and make up his own tonal scale, and play them. And you were telling me about his new thing, where he constructs realistic weapons out of paper scraps."

Artist, Mac Raboy, who was poles apart from Beck's easy simplicity, also evoked memories from the Binders.

"Mac Raboy," Otto mused. "There was a prima donna! Impossible to work with. He always complained that there were too many action scenes."

Mr. Mind's Day Dream

"Too many action scenes?" I repeated. "Isn't that a rather unusual complaint for an artist?"

"Well, maybe. Mac didn't care about plot, about conflict. He wanted beautiful, fairyland scenes for Captain Marvel Jr. to float through."

"Many of Raboy's shots were remarkably similar," Marty said. "I know stats were used, but how many?"

"Just a minute!", Jack was up from his chair, running upstairs. "I have some pages of Raboy's, I'll show you." Jack soon returned, pages in hand. Interspersed with patches of Raboy's precise brush work were photostats of previous work. Indeed, almost every panel was a total, or partial stat. Jack told us that Raboy did all the paste-ups himself, refusing to let anyone else touch his page.

After bidding a temporary farewell to Jack, who presented us with a beautiful set of landscape prints, drawn in a detailed pen-and-ink style very different from the simple line drawings of his comic book heyday, we returned to Otto's.

Otto led us up to the second floor to a small room crammed with books--his studio. I mentally deleted the typewriter and added a drawing board, and I could see a smaller version of Steve Ditko's studio. Most of the books were multiple copies of Otto's recent paperbacks, but the room also contained some comics, books by Heinlein and Wells, and multiple copies of Steranko's "History of Comics."

Al, Marty and I then followed Otto downstairs to greet Jack and his wife. Over a leisurely dinner, we swapped horror stories. Every fan has one, but the Binders both had gems. Otto one day deciding to give all his "worthless" extra copies of Capt. Marvel, et, al, to the neighborhood kids, and Jack, tired of carting his magazines around, loading them all in barrels and taking them to the dump.

About eight, as dusk settled, we thanked our hosts and headed for Vermont to see Tom Fagan. It certainly had been a fascinating afternoon. One that we would all long remember. As we drove, a thunder and lightning storm overtook us, prompting Al to try a few unavailing "Shazam's." I told Al that I heard the ghostly voice of the old wizard muttering, "No way, Al!" However, cynic that he is, he refused to believe me.

All Capt. Marvel related character are © National Per. Pub. 1973

Batman, The Human Flying Saucer is © Milson Pub. Co. Inc. 1973.

Photos for this article by...Al Bradford.

*SPECIAL THANKS TO: Jack Binder for allowing me to print the hitherto unpublished drawings of Mary Marvel, Uncle Marvel and the Mac Raboy model sheet, from his personal scrap book...and to C.C. Beck, Bill Black and Anthony Kowalik for this article's art.

CAPT. MARVEL JR. FLIES AGAIN!

An Interview With:

DAVE COCKRUM

by Martin L. Greim

I've known Dave Cockrum for quite a few years and it pleases me no end to see him becoming one of DC's top artists. His work on The Legion of Super Heroes is something to behold and now he's Capt. Marvel Jr.'s new artist. I interviewed Dave at the 1973 New York Comic Art Convention and obtained the following information.

Q. Dave, how about giving us some background information on yourself; such as where you were born, art training, etc.

A. I was born in Pendelton, Oregon, in November of 1943. I took art in high school and attended Southern Illinois University and Colorado State University; majoring in art at both places. However, most of what I do in the comics is self taught or learned from observation. I also learned a lot as Murphy Anderson's assistant, back in 1971. I picked up a lot of invaluable tips from Murphy on how to work and especially on inking. My inking was crummy, until I started working with him.

Q. What was your first published work?

A. Well, I don't know if you'd consider this professional work, because I wasn't paid for it; but I did a drawing for the back cover of a short lived science fiction magazine called "Spaceway Magazine." My first paid for work was for Warren Publications. The story was called "Prisoner of the Pool" and appeared in Vampirella #11.

Q. You are now doing the Capt. Marvel Jr. strip at DC. Did you apply for this job, or was it assigned to you?

A. I asked for it! When Capt. Marvel first appeared at National, I thought, "Gee, I'd like to draw Capt. Marvel!" But then I thought about it and realized that only C.C. Beck should draw that. After a little more thought, I decided Jr. would be the sort of thing I'd be better at. I did 3 pages of sample material to show Julie Schwartz, in hopes he'd let me draw it. I guess a lot of people asked to do the strip, but none of them cared enough to do any samples; so I got the job.

Q. How is Jr. going to be handled? Is he going to be more in the Beck or Mac Raboy style?

A. I'd like to make it look as much like Raboy as I can; but not being Raboy, or as polished as he was, it will take quite some time to work up to that grade of art. The Raboy image is what National wants and they've given me stated pages of his work for reference, plus I have a few comics with Raboy's work myself.

Q. How many times a year are you doing Jr.?

A. It will alternate, as a back-up feature in Shazam, about every three issues. The other two features are Mary Marvel and The Marvel Family. Bob Oksner will be doing Mary Marvel and Kurt Schaffenberger will do The Marvel Family.

Q. Jr.'s stories were often more substantial than Capt. Marvel's. Is National intending to do them that way?

A. Well, I don't think they really know what to do with the character right now. You might even think the first story is a little silly. It's about a gang who's stealing elevators, for a rare mineral they possess, melting them down and exporting them to a foreign country for a secret weapon they're building. I think Jr. will probably have more solid stories, as soon as they decide on which direction they want to take him.

Q. What's your work day like?

A. It's hard to rate how fast I work, because I do so much goofing off. I have 16 lizards, 3 newts and a turtle in my studio and I like to watch them while I'm working. I have to feed 'em and change their water and all that too. When I do a comic page, I pencil it completely first, then I go back and ink it. I don't pick selected panels to ink first. Recently I discovered pens. I've got some fountain pens that use india ink and I'm so delighted with the results, that I'm putting more pen work into my strips. When I ink with a brush, I use a #3 Robert Simonds Lancer water color brush. This brush has a good thick barrel, so I can get a good hold on it. It's kind of an unusual brush to ink with, but I like it.

Q. Do you work during the day or the evening?

A. I get most of my work done between the hours of 8 in the evening and 4 in the morning. There's less distraction then.

Q. Is there any difference working with Elliot Maggin, who wrote the Capt. Marvel Jr. story, and Cary Bates, who writes the Legion of Super Heroes stories?

A. Yes. I've done two of Elliot's stories and I've just been handed the scripts. When I do a Legion story, I sit down with Cary and we have a bull session first. This way some of my ideas show up in the Legion stories. I get away with a lot in the Legion series, but nothing that doesn't have the approval of Julie Schwartz. He's got an eye like a hawk.

Dave's work combines the styles of Anderson, Adams and Kubert; not to mention the strong emergence of his own. It's a pleasure to view his fine work!

CAPTAIN WITH A CURSE

by

Martin L. Greim

Powerful, dynamic, possessing terrific strength and physical ability. Words like these are usually reserved for super heroes. However, in this case, they are refering to a super villain...CAPT. NAZI!

Capt. Nazi was all of the above, plus, in later stories, he could even fly. He was Nazi Germany's challenger to the super heroes of the democracies. Capt. Nazi burst upon the scene, in the December, 1941 issue of Master Comics. (#21) These were good times for him, for he had not yet brought about the curse that would plague him until the end of his comic book career. Glory was his, as Adolph Hitler himself introduced him to his warlords. Hitler pulled a cord, drapes fell back and there stood Capt. Nazi. A handsome man, a man of might - his face marked with a Heidelberg dueling scar. His costume consisted of a dark green torso, light green legs, red gloves, belt, colar and boots. (The colar, gloves and belt would later become yellow and the boots blue.) From his belt hung a holster containing a steel gray Luger automatic. Yellow epauletts matched his short cropped blond hair, and on his chest, in the center of a large black circle, was a white Swastika, the symbol of Nazi Germany.

As the amazed warlords looked on, Hitler showed Capt. Nazi pictures of four of America's heroes; Capt. Marvel, Bulletman, Spy Smasher and Minute-Man. Capt. Nazi's assignment..."Rid America of those weaklings called heroes!" Capt. Nazi proceeded to show what he would do to America's heroes, as he smashed his fist through the wall, destroying the heroes pictures that had hung there. Then, after a brief display of his powers, he left to "Blitz" America.

Before we follow Capt. Nazi to America, let's take a look at the art and writing. Capt. Nazi was created by Fawcett Editor, Ed Herron and he treated the character quite seriously. Because of this, one could almost see Capt. Nazi as a hero, rather than a villain. Another thing that was treated seriously was the art. This story was drawn by Mac Raboy and unlike many artists of

the time, he didn't make Hitler, or the Nazis, look or act like clowns. It should be noted too, that the shots of Capt. Nazi drawn in this story, would be used again and again in future stories featuring the villain. Reverse shots, reduced or enlarged photostats, used in combination with other drawings, made up many of the Mac Raboy panels. Raboy did the actual placing of the photostats on a page and he was very creative about it. He used them as an aid to meet deadlines. Where many artists drew quickly and effortlessly, Raboy labored over his assignments. The results, however, were masterpieces!

It is now sometime later in America. From out of nowhere, Capt. Nazi drops into Times Square and wreaks havoc. Before he departs, he issues a challenge to Bulletman and all of America's other heroes. A short time later, when this incident is reported to police headquarters, Jim Barr, police scientist, prepares to answer the challenge as Bulletman!

Barr, a brilliant scientist who had once been a weakling, built up his body after he tried out a drug he invented to make criminals honest citizens. The drug transformed him into a man of great strength. Barr then perfected a gravity helmet that not only gave him the power of flight, but attracted bullets fired at him, and bounced them harmlessly away.

As Bulletman is about to fly off into the cold evening sky, he is met by none other than Capt. Marvel. He too had been challenged by Capt. Nazi and for the first time, these two heroes joined forces to combat the Nazi menace. In order to cover more territory, the two split up; each covering a different section of the city.

Meanwhile, Capt. Nazi walks down a darkened passage way of a local subway station. With unbelievable power, he rips up the iron rails. He smiles, believing the subway train will crash, killing all its passengers. With only seconds to spare, Capt. Marvel arrives and stops the speeding train. "Curses! It's Capt. Marvel!", exclaims Capt. Nazi as he rushes away. "I'd stay and knock his ears off...but I got work to do."

It is at a crowded fairground where Capt. Nazi strikes next. He begins throwing people about like rag dolls and even goes so far as to shoot one who tries to resist. Seeing a large ferris wheel, he rips out a bolt that will cause it to fall, bringing death to all its riders. This time it is Bulletman who saves the day. "Hello, Capt. Nutsy!" is his remark, as he lands a savage blow to Capt. Nazi's jaw and then streaks off to gently lower the ferris wheel to the ground. A terrific battle follows, with neither side winning. In order to escape, Capt. Nazi takes a small boy hostage by holding a gun at his head. The boy is later saved by Bulletman, after Capt. Nazi throws him off a cliff.

By this time, a million dollar reward is placed on the German's head...dead or alive! In reply to this, Capt. Nazi threatens to blow up the Brooklyn Navy Yard and defies anybody to stop him. Inside the navy yard, Capt. Nazi steals from the shadows and prepares to throw sticks of dynamite at some unfinished ships. Suddenly he is confronted by Capt. Marvel! Before Capt. Marvel can move, he gets the dynamite full in the face. After the smoke from the blast clears, Capt. Nazi is gone, leaving only a note which the unharmed Capt. Marvel reads to the now arrived Bulletman and Bulletgirl "You'd better keep your snooping nose in Whiz Comics, Capt. Marvel..because I'm coming over there next month to beat your brains out! I'll get Bulletman later." Yes, Capt. Nazi was heading for Whiz and disaster!

Never one to heed warnings, Capt. Marvel was present in Whiz #25, the December 1941 issue. After finishing his radio broadcast, Billy Batson is told by his boss, Mr. Morris, that Capt. Nazi is at the WHIZ sending tower. A quick Shazam and Capt. Marvel is on his way. Meanwhile, Billy's young friend, Whitey Murphy, climbs the tower after Capt. Nazi; only to be thrown off by the powerful German. Seconds before he hits the ground Whitey is saved by Capt. Marvel. This proves an adequate diversion, for Capt. Nazi is able to elude Capt. Marvel to cause more trouble at a new power plant near a great dam. Here, he tampers with the giant turbines; so that once switched on, they can not be shut off again. The turbines whirl faster and faster and almost explode until Billy Batson, who was covering the opening of the plant for WHIZ, changes to Capt. Marvel and brings them under control.

It is at a test run of a new army plane, that Capt. Marvel finally catches up with Capt. Nazi. Capt. Nazi is in the plane's cockpit, about to kill the pilot, when Capt. Marvel flies up, pulls Nazi out and sends him flying with a terrific punch. Down, down, plunges the dreaded German, until he cleaves into the dark waters below.

Fate decreed that Capt. Nazi would not drown! A boy and his grandfather, who had been fishing in the bay, race to save him. As they pull him into the boat, the boy notices the strange costume, but it is too late. Capt. Nazi drowns the old man and delivers a crushing blow, with a boat oar, that sends the boy into the water. Capt. Marvel sees the boy drowning and quickly saves the lad. Rushing him to the hospital, he is told the boy will be dead before morning.

Shortly after midnight, Billy Batson sneaks into the boy's hospital room and carries him off. A short time later, he lays the boy at the foot of old Shazam's throne. Lighting the magic urn, the spirit of Shazam appears. Billy pleads for help, but is told by Shazam that what has happened cannot be changed. However, Billy, as Capt. Marvel, can pass on some of his powers to the dying boy. Billy speaks the name of the wizard and the red clad form of Capt. Marvel appears. The injured boy rouses, and murmers the name of his hero... Capt. Marvel! Again the magic lightning crashes and where once lay the crippled boy, now stands a healthy youth in a red, blue and yellow uniform similar to Capt. Marvel's. Capt. Marvel Jr. is born!

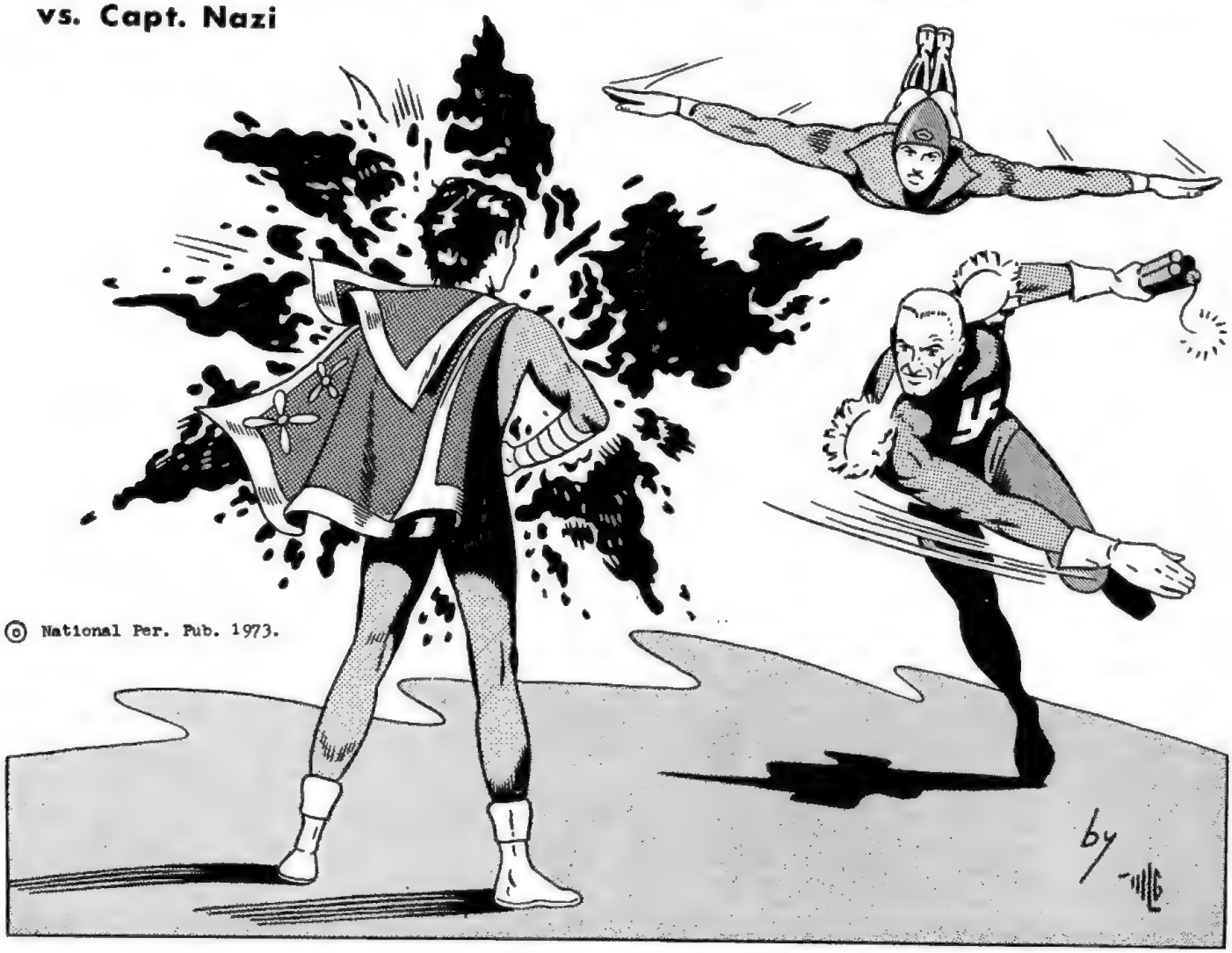
Jr. is told he must use his powers to help others and especially to bring Capt. Nazi to justice. He is also told that by saying Capt. Marvel again, he will change back to his original shape. He found that when he resumed his normal form, that his leg remained crippled due to the blow Capt. Nazi had dealt him. Capt. Nazi had killed an old man and crippled a young boy, but in

so doing, he had cursed himself with a nemesis that would haunt him until the end of his days.

Capt. Nazi, as yet unaware of Capt. Marvel Jr., returned to the pages of Master #22 to create more chaos. A villain called Dr. Eternity was killing people, from a list of ten, by pouring boiling wax over them. However, Bulletman and Bulletgirl were so hot on his trail, that he enlisted the aid of Capt. Nazi. The duo go after Eternity's next victim, Sir Henry Welch, but are foiled by the intervention of Bulletman. As Bulletman pursues the evil duo, he comes upon a small lame boy, who he thinks is lost. He soon learns this is not the case and that the boy has the powers of Capt. Marvel. To prove this, the boy yells the name of his hero and, in a flash of lightning, Capt. Marvel Jr. appears. Together, Jr. and Bulletman locate the two villains, just as they are about to kill their next victim. The battle is on! Bulletman locks in combat with Capt. Nazi, as Jr. downs Eternity. Capt. Nazi throws an axe at Bulletman that misses and hits Jr. on the back of the head. Naturally it has no effect on the boy with the powers of Capt. Marvel. Jr. turns and for the first time, Capt. Nazi feels the power of what he had helped create. Jr.'s fist slams into the pride of Nazi Germany! It is a fist Capt. Nazi will feel again and again in the pages of Master and Capt. Marvel Jr. Comics in the months to come. Capt. Nazi does manage to escape though, and after Dr. Eternity is turned over to the police, Jr. and Bulletman ponder where he will strike next. However, Bulletman was never again to encounter the Nazi super man, for with issue #23 of Master Comics, Capt. Marvel Jr. would have the lead feature strip. The only other hero to battle Capt. Nazi again was Capt. Marvel himself, in Capt. Marvel Adventures #22. Capt. Nazi was one of Mr. Mind's "Society of Evil" members and he was trying to steal two black pearls. To own both gave the owner a crystal ball effect of any event he wished to see. Capt. Nazi had already stollen one pearl and was off to India to obtain the mate. The pearl was in the eye of an idol and a tremendous battle takes place for it, with Capt. Marvel besting Nazi; but losing it to another member of "The Society of Evil"...Ibac.

Issue #23 of Master Comics saw Capt. Nazi trying to kill the President of the United States. He loosened a train car bearing the President and sent it streaking down a grade. Jr. knocked Nazi off a cliff and saved the train from destruction. It seemed certain that Capt. Nazi had been killed in the fall. However, this was not so, for in issue #26 of Master Comics he turned up again. This time he teamed up with Mr. Macabre, a villain Jr. had encountered in Master #24. Both were defeated by the young marvel and again Nazi was thought dead...killed in the destruction of a Nazi sea raider off the coast of England. Saved for the second time from a watery grave, Capt. Nazi was pulled from the drink by an unsuspecting English patrol boat, in Master #27. Once in London, he set off false air raid alarms to pave the way for a real air strike. Jr. foiled the plot by capturing a signaling device used to call the Luftwaffe and led the Nazi planes into a squadron of British aircraft. At the end of the story Capt. Nazi was captured by Jr., but vowed no prison could hold him. He was right too, for he escaped in Master #28 to capture U.S. production wizard, Frank Edsel. This story featured some of the best Mac Raboy art yet, as Jr. goes to Germany to free Edsel. It was about this time that Capt. Marvel Jr. Comics #1 came out. (Nov. 18, 1942) The first issue featured a brief 3 page repeat of Jr.'s origin and a battle with Capt. Nazi as well. In Master #34, Capt. Nazi was given an added power...the power to fly! By inhaling an invention called "Flying Gas" he was able to soar like a bird. In Capt. Marvel Jr. #8, Capt. Nazi tried a different ploy. He attempted to convince the Allies that he had repented, so he could clear the way for an invasion of America. Both Capt. Marvel Jr. and the U.S. Army defeated him this time. Capt. Nazi's battles were endless and filled with frustration. I'm sure he rued the day he brought Capt. Marvel Jr. into the world and became The Captain With A Curse!

Capt. Marvel Jr. and Bulletman vs. Capt. Nazi



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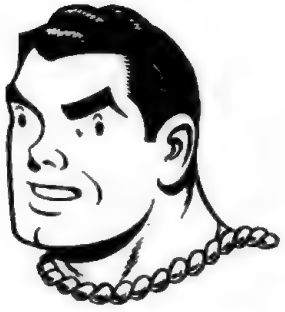
OH-OH! THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR....

SCHAFFENBERGER!

by Martin L. Greim



In the picture above, Kurt Schaffenberger steps between the two mightiest heroes in comics...Capt. Marvel and Superman! Kurt knows both of these heroes intimately, for he is one of the few artists to have ever drawn them both. Recently I contacted Kurt to ask if he'd do the cover for this issue. As you can see, he came through with a beautiful rendering! Kurt was also kind enough to submit to an interview and do the above drawing. Before we get into the interview, let's take a look at Kurt's background. "Jimmy Olsen" #155 contained his autobiography. It read as follows: "I was born on a small farm in the Thuringian Forest of central Germany, where I spent the first seven years of my life. In preparation for my career as a cartoonist, I tended geese, hearded goats, and hoed potatoes. When my family migrated to the U.S., we settled first in Hartford, Conn. but moved to suburban West Hartford shortly thereafter. I went through public schools there, graduating from high school first in my class, as a result of which I was awarded a scholarship which I used to enter Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y. While attending Pratt, I worked four summers in a machine shop to help pay my way.

On graduation, the first job I was able to land was with Jack Binder at his studio in Englewood, N. J., which was turning out art work on a production line basis for the then newly emerging field of comic books. The staff consisted of about 15 men, most of us from the same graduating class at Pratt.

While looking for rooms in Englewood, N.J., I met the football coach of one of the local high schools, who told me that he'd be shortly vacating his flat and suggested I see about taking it over - which I did. This coach subsequently achieved a degree of fame in a place called Green Bay. His name was Vince Lombardi, and he was also responsible for my meeting the girl who later became my wife in that it was the landlady of the aforementioned apartment who introduced me to her.

Most of the characters, with the notable exception of Capt. Marvel, that we worked on at the Binder Studio have long disappeared into limbo--Bulletman, Blackstone the Magician, Ibis the Invincible, Fighting Yank, etc., etc.

Exactly one year to the day after getting out of Pratt, I was mustered into the U.S. Army, where I spent the next four years, three of them in Europe. I went overseas with the 1st Special Service Co., which had the prime function of running shows, movies, sporting

events, and other forms of entertainment for the troops in England. The posters that I prepared for these events brought me to the attention of a major who had run an art agency in civilian life and who was then in the process of setting one up for the army. For the next two years, we turned out training posters, charts, graphs, and displays for the army until the Battle of the Bulge made those activities seem somewhat superfluous, resulting in the disbanding of our unit.

Learning that an outfit called the Office of Strategic Services was looking for German-speaking personnel, I joined the O.S.S. and spent the next six months in Intelligence and counter-espionage work until my discharge in late '45 as a Master Sergeant.

Back in civilian life, I drifted naturally to the field I knew best--comics, working mainly for Fawcett Publications on the Captain Marvel series until it was halted in 1953. After that, I spent two years doing general art work in a small studio, but I always kept one foot in the comic book field, drawing for such companies as Classics Illustrated, American Comics, Marvel Comics, and others.

When National was looking for an artist for the Lois Lane magazine which was about to start, I applied for and got the job. I stayed with Lois until 1968 when I was assigned to the Supergirl book.

Along with newsstand comics, I have done considerable work in the commercial comics field, primarily for Custom Comics and doing special books for diverse accounts as Howard Johnson, Chrysler, General Motors, the New York Police and Fire Departments, U.S. Air Force, various utility companies and many others.

I am married, the father of two children (a married daughter and a son), and am presently living in suburban New Jersey."

Interview

The first question I asked Kurt was prompted by his Superman meets Capt. Marvel drawing. To my knowledge, there is only one other drawing ever published of these two together, done by the same artist who worked on both of them, and that appeared in "Lois Lane" #42, July, 1963.

Q. In the splash panel of "The Monkey's Paw!" you had Superman bowling over a batch of super heroes to get to Lois. In that panel, you had Capt. Marvel as one of the flattened heroes. Did you slip this by the D.C. Editors, or was it spotted?

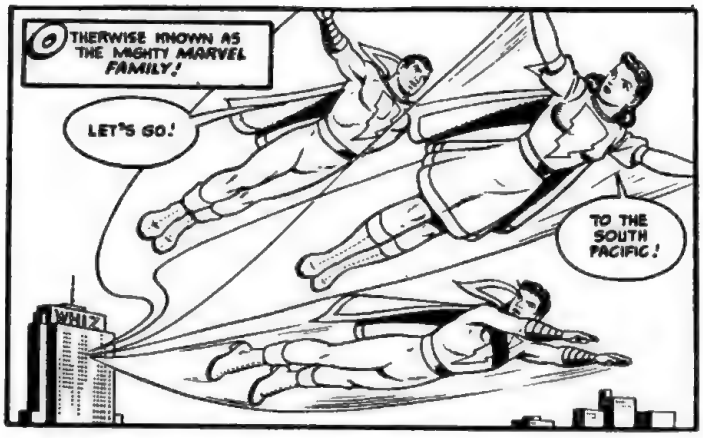
A. The story is that you slip very little past any of the editors at National. Mort Weisinger and I both got a chuckle over this, seeing as we both figured that Captain Marvel was a dead issue, and putting him in as one of the flattened heroes was somewhat symbolic.

Q. What was your first published work?

A. Well, at this "point in time", that's a little bit hard to say seeing this is now over 30 years ago. I do recall that the first job that I worked on at the Jack Binder studio was doing backgrounds for a Captain Marvel story. Other than that I really couldn't say what the first character that I worked on was. It strikes me it would be someone like "Bullet Man", "Bullet Girl" or "Blackstone the Magician" or possibly "Mr. Scarlet and Pinky." I really couldn't say at this point.

Q. Will you elaborate a bit about your years at Fawcett and the Binder Studio?

A. First, my time at the Binder Studio was not years; it was exactly one year between the time I got out of art school and went into the Army. There were about 15 of us, all from the same graduating class at Pratt Institute. We started at the Binder Studio which consisted of an old barn behind the house where Jack lived. Most of the other fellows who worked there went on into different lines of endeavor. Some stayed in the art field; others got completely out of it. The only notable



exception who is still in the comics field would be Ken Bald who does the "Dr. Kildare" strip for King Features Syndicate.

When I got out of the Army in late '45, I contacted Wendell Crowley, who was then an editor at Fawcett's, and had been more or less of an office boy back at the Jack Binder Studio and thru him I got right back into the comics field, starting on "Ibis the Magician", my first strip, when I got out. My years at Fawcett after the war were quite happy ones. I had just gotten married; we had started raising a family; we had a group going of other people who worked down there at Fawcett's, including Clarence Beck, Jack Binder, Otto Binder, Pete Riss, Charlie Tomsey and others. We used to get together socially, as well as having business contacts. All of this came to a screeching halt in June of 1953 when I received a phone call from Wendell informing me that Fawcett was no longer in the comic book business. A sad day indeed!

Q. What were your feelings when the Capt. Marvel series ended?

A. I can only say it was one of utter and total dismay. At the time this happened, it was one of the periodic slumps in the comic business and I spent almost two years pounding on doors looking for more work. I finally went into a studio in New York with an artist's agent named Epworth and, between the two of us, we managed to get enough work together to keep me going for a while.

It was during this period that I was doing some work for American Comics and Marvel comics which, at that time, I believe was under a different name. I also

ME ROB MORE PEOPLE— ULPS! HIM NO FALL DOWN!
NO, CHUM! WE KNEW A SCHEMING CROOK LIKE YOU WOULD START OPERATING SOONER OR LATER! WE PATROLLED THE TOWN!
BOINGG!

did one book for Classics Illustrated called "Soldiers of Fortune". In the summer of '57, when the family and I were on vacation up in Maine, I received a long distance phone call from Otto Binder informing me that National was looking for an artist to do the Lois Lane book, which they were contemplating putting out at this time, and that he had recommended my name to Mort Weisinger. I called Mort up from Maine and made a date to see him, brought in some samples and got the job doing the Lois Lane book.

Q. When you were working on Capt. Marvel, did you ever find yourself comparing your work with C.C. Beck's?

A. Well, of course I had to, because the main character was one Beck had developed and I had to make mine compatible to his. However, I do believe our

approaches were a little bit different in that I tried to get a little more realism and Beck's was more of a cartoony approach than mine.

Q. Of the characters you've worked on, do you have any particular favorite?

A. I would have to say that my favorite is still Lois Lane, for the reason that I took a character which had played a very minor role in the Superman strip and developed a personality that was, I think, distinctive and unique.

Q. Has your artwork been influenced by any particular artist?

A. Well, when I first got into the comics business it was, of course, Alex Raymond, Milton Canniff, Hal Foster and artists like that that I admired tremendously, and still do to this day. I never tried to exactly emulate any of them. I just took them as a point of departure and tried to develop a style of my own.

Q. What were some of the characters you worked on at American and Marvel?

A. The majority of the stories that I did there were one-shot features. Some of the stories were mysteries, some of them were romance features. There was no specific character that I did for either of those companies.

Q. What were your thoughts on drawing Superman in Lois Lane after doing Capt. Marvel for so long?

A. At that point I was glad to have any one feature or character to stick with after having had these aforementioned years of just batting around with a character here and a character there. I didn't find any great difficulty in drawing Superman because he was just another musole-bound super-hero in a long union suit. One minor difficulty was that Superman was being drawn by other various artists and the styles were not necessarily alike. Wayne Boring did one Superman, Curt Swan did another Superman and there were several other artists that were also working on the character, so I had to develop a sort of compromise which was Superman, but was still my style.

Q. What's your work day like?

A. I generally start about 9 o'clock in the morning and work thru until 5:30 or so in the evening, with a break for lunch. Then we have dinner, and most often I will come back in the studio and work until about 10 o'clock at night. I generally pencil a story completely first and then take it in for lettering and then bring it home and ink it. My average pace of working is to pencil two pages a day or ink two pages a day, so the total output would be one complete page a day.

Q. When were you born?

A. I was born December 15, 1920.

Q. What artist tools do you work with?

A. They are basically quite simple. Depending upon the temperature and humidity, I will pencil with anything from a number F to a number 4H pencil. In other words, If the humidity is relatively high you need a softer pencil in order to make a drawing on the paper. When I ink, I use a Windsor-Newton Series 7 No. 1 water color brush, and a fine pen to do the pen work.

Q. Do you have any favorite artists in the comic book field today?

A. I have to be totally honest and say that I really don't know very much about the artists in the comic book field, because I don't really read comics that much.

Q. What are your opinions of todays comic book industry?

A. I would say that I believe that there will always be a place for comic books, although I do not think they will ever regain the popularity that they once had before the advent of television. I think the main problem that the industry has today is one of distri-

WE DID IT! IN ONE SIMPLE LESSON, WE SHOWED THE IMMENSE VALUE OF MONEY AS A MEDIUM OF EASY EXCHANGE!
WE'VE JUST LAUNCHED THIS BACKWARD STONE AGE LAND INTO A NEW AND BETTER CIVILIZATION!

bution, for the reason that our prime outlets of years ago - the Mom and Pop candy stores - are rapidly disappearing. I've heard one publisher admit, at one of the Academy of Comic Book Art meetings, that as many as 60% of all comics published never see the light of day. They stagnate in a warehouse somewhere! I think until such time as they can get this distribution problem straightened out, comics will continue just putting along like they have been for the past 15 years or so, nobody really making any big money in them nor making any large impact on the population as a whole. I still feel that the comic book is vital and should be a larger factor in the entertainment field than it is, but until such time as we can get this distribution problem straightened out, I'm afraid we are just going to sit where we are. I don't know the answer and I don't think anybody else does, unfortunately.

Q. What is your opinion of ACBA?

A. I have attended several of their meetings and they were interesting, which is about as much as I can say for them. I am a member of the National Cartoonist's Society, which I joined initially in order to see if I could do something about the condition of the comic book field as far as the artist's rates, the reprints and other facets of the comic book's industry were concerned. Unfortunately, I found out that it's mainly a club-type atmosphere, where guys can get together to pat each other on the back, have a few drinks together and shoot the bull. As far as doing anything constructive and concrete, I have yet to see any evidence of it. As for the awards dinners that they have at the ACBA and also at the National Cartoonist's Society with their "Reuben Awards" and ACBA with their "Shazam Awards", I have very mixed feelings about those. I consider them much too self-serving, like the Oscar Awards in the motion picture industry. It seems that all we are doing, really, is patting ourselves on the back and saying "aren't we great."

Q. Do you have any hobbies?

A. Well, with a 7-room house to take care of on weekends and the little free time that I do have as a free-lancer, I really don't have that much time for hobbies. I did used to do some skiing during the winter, but that came to an abrupt halt with the advent of my 50th birthday, the arrival of my first grandchild and my being flat on my back with a severe case of sciatica.

Q. Now that Capt. Marvel has been revived, what do you think his place will be in today's comics?

A. I wish I had a good answer to that question. I really don't know. I'm afraid a good deal of the popularity of Captain Marvel right now is due primarily to nostalgia. I have always considered Captain Marvel a much better character than Superman in this sense that Superman took himself much too seriously, whereas Captain Marvel has always been approached tongue-in-cheek.

Q. How much of the Captain Marvel art are you going to be doing?

A. I have finished one Marvel Family story for Julie Schwartz and I'm now doing a Captain Marvel that I should be starting on Monday. As to how much more I'm going to be doing on the Marvel, I really don't know. There is a question as to whether I'll stay on Jimmy Olsen, which I've been doing for the past year and a half, or whether I'll switch over entirely to the Captain Marvel characters. Right now, I'm doing the Marvel feature along with Bob Ochsner. We are rotating every other month.

Q. Do you have any favorite newspaper strip?

A. Yes, my favorite would be "Gasoline Alley" in the dailies, as well as "Beetle Bailey" and "Hi and Lois".

Also, "On Stage" as far as the art work goes, although I do wish Leonard Starr would get his stories moving along a little faster; I think they drag far too much to hold reader interest. The reason I do enjoy that strip, however, is it has, in my estimation, the best art work of any of the daily strips that I have seen recently.

Q. What is your opinion of relevant comic book stories?

A. I belong to the school that believes that if you want to send a message you should call Western Union. I think as far as newsstand comics are concerned, they should be geared primarily toward entertainment. I do believe, however, that the comic medium has never been utilized to its greatest extent as far as an educational or instructional tool is concerned; but if you are going to sell comic books on a newsstand I think most people - most kids - buy them with the idea of being entertained, and the message bit, I do not believe, goes over that well. But I could be wrong.

With that, my interview with Kurt Schaffenberger comes to an end. I want to thank Kurt for giving us some insight into his career! Kurt's art has always been the perfect blend between serious and humorous. This range is something very few artists can accomplish. He is also a man with a sense of humor. Take a look through some of his Lois Lane stories and you'll see him drawn into some of the crowd scenes, also look at the name he uses whenever one of his characters gets a box of candy..."Schaff's Candy." It's always a pleasure to read a story drawn by Kurt and with C.C. Beck leaving Captain Marvel after issue #11, it certainly looks like a job for SCHAFFENBERGER!

All characters pictured in this article are © 1973 by National Per. Pub.

Art for this feature by: Kurt Schaffenberger, Martin L. Greim and Al Bradford.

The World's Mightiest Mortals

by MLG + AL BRADFORD

DITKO'S

H SERIES

HERO: ANY PERSON ADMIRED FOR HIS QUALITIES OR ACHIEVEMENTS AND REGARDED AS AN IDEAL OR MODEL!

MAN: A RATIONAL ANIMAL!

PART II

THE LOGIC OF JUSTICE

FITTING ENDS TO CHOSEN MEANS

©1973..STEVE DITKO

YAH! IT'S ED, BUT THE OTHER GUY IS NOT THE MANIAC WHO ATTACKED ME!

WE'LL FIND HIM—THROUGH ED!..WE BETTER PLAY IT SAFE WHILE SPOT IS IN AN UPROAR..TAKE BOTH TO HIM!

OKAY, MOVE!

..BUT..I..I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

A BREAK! THEY'RE AFRAID TO ACT ON THEIR OWN!... PLAY ALONG... FOR NOW!

THIS IS ALL *YOUR* **FAULT**! THEY'LL *MAKE ME GIVE YOU AWAY*—THEN *FIX US BOTH* FOR YOUR **STUPID HEROICS!**

YOU'RE FREE TO EXPOSE ME AT ANY TIME FOR ANY REASON YOU CHOOSE!

*WHAT'S KEEPING THEM!?**@*** THE **BOSS** *DELIBERATELY* PICKED THIS PLACE FOR ROUGH STUFF BECAUSE HE KNOWS WHAT IT DOES TO ME! **KEEP SPRAYING!**×#@*!

I HEAR THEIR CAR NOW, *SPOT!*

..EVEN IN *HERE*—*I'M SUFFOCATING!*..EVER SINCE THAT NIGHT..AS A KID..I USED TO *MUG DRUNKS*..THEN A GANG OF *FILTHY BUMS JUMPED ME*... I ALMOST *DIED HOLDING MY BREATH*..NOW IF I *FEEL* A SPECK OF *DIRT*... *I'M BACK*..**SOURROUNDED**..**SUFFOCATING**..**UGH!**..

..NOW BECAUSE OF TWO ×#@*! *TROUBLE MAKERS*. ..I MIGHT BE *KICKED OUT*... *INTO THE* **DIRT**.. *LOSE* WHAT LITTLE **PROTECTION** I DO HAVE...

HEY! WHAT'S WITH THIS **BUM?**

HE WAS WITH SKY.. THOUGHT WE BETTER LET SPOT DECIDE ABOUT HIM!

ARE YOU CRAZY!

WE LET THAT **DIRTY** *THING* **ANYWHERE NEAR SPOT**—**HE'LL KILL US!**.. *GET RID OF HIM*—**NOW**—**FOR GOOD!**

..THOUGHT I MIGHT NEED SOME *TRICKS* LIKE THIS *DUST BOMB*...

I.

..IT IS ME OR THEM SO ANYTHING GOES..
..THEY DON'T DESERVE ANY BETTER!
ED, TIE THEM UP..TIGHT! I HEAR VOICES..HOPE SPOT DOESN'T HAVE TOO MANY BODYGUARDS!
X#@ WHERE ARE THEY?! I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS..WHERE IS THE SPRAY..AL..AL! AL!?
HELLO, SPOT! I'M TAKING OVER YOUR RACKET! HAND OVER YOUR RECORDS PEACEFULLY AND MAYBE I'LL MAKE YOU MY PARTNER..ME AND YOU..CLOSE TOGETHER SPOT.... ..WANT TO SHAKE HANDS ON IT..
..WHA..MY GOD! HOW?! NO! GET AWAY FROM ME! UGH! ..AL..JOE..
..NO HELP, SPOT..IT IS BETWEEN ME AND YOU..WHERE'S THE RECORDS?..DO I HAVE TO SHOUT IN YOUR EAR..
DON'T TOUCH ME!.. PLEASE!.. I DON'T HAVE ANY RECORDS..UGH..
I'LL STICK CLOSE TO YOU.. LIKE YOUR SKIN UNTIL I GET THEM..MAYBE IF I SEARCH YOU...
NO!..STAY AWAY!..THE..THE BIG BOSS HAS THE RECORDS.. HE DOESN'T TRUST ANYONE TO HOLD OR SEE THEM..
WHO'S THIS BIG BOSS? DO I HAVE TO SQUEEZE IT OUT OF YOU... PUT MY HANDS AROUND YOUR..
NO! DON'T!..MY GOD..I.. I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT!.. HE'D KILL ME..
YOU'RE LYING!..GOT A COMBINATION.. KEY TAPED TO YOUR SKIN..I'LL FIND..
NO!
2.

NO! STAY BACK!..IT..IT'S SAM PUREN..HE'S GOT THE FILE IN A SECRET PLACE!..IT'S THE TRUTH, I SWEAR IT!
YOU WANT A SAMPLE OF WHAT I'LL DO TO YOU IF YOU'VE LIED TO ME?
NO, DON'T, I SWEAR TO GOD IT'S THE TRUTH..PLEASE.. DON'T TOUCH ME...
OOHHHH!!..
HE'S FAINTED! YOU'RE CRUEL, D.! THIS ISN'T A MOVIE! YOU'RE DEALING WITH REAL PEOPLE.. REAL FEELINGS!
..PUREN THE LAWYER!? EVEN IF YOU COULD GET TO PUREN... YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO HANDLE HIM! IT'S ALL OVER!
NOT YET!.. TIE HIM UP!
WHILE DOING CHARACTER STUDIES AT TRIALS, I SAW PUREN'S TECHNIQUE!
HE'S A TWISTER! GIVEN SOMETHING TO BUILD ON, PUREN CAN GET PEOPLE TO FORGET PREMISES, DOUBT FACTS AND MAKE OPINIONS SOUND LIKE HOLY TRUTHS!
THREATS WON'T GET THE RECORDS FROM HIM..I'D HAVE TO GO ALL THE WAY..FORCE..TORTURE..SO THAT'S OUT! THEN WHAT?..
LEAVE THEM AND LET'S GO BACK TO THE SHOP..I WANT TO TEST AN IDEA!
HOW DOES MY TAPED VOICE SOUND?
PASSABLE!... BUT DON'T GO THROUGH WITH IT.. IT'S TOO RISKY!
YOU READY TO GO TO THE POLICE? ..NO! SO HOW DO WE SAVE OUR SKINS?
I..I DON'T KNOW..
..NOW AN EDGE..A COSTUME TO SHAKE UP PUREN..WHAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR HIM?..YES.. OF COURSE!
3.

PUREN!.. I WANT MY FULL TEN GRAND CUT!
FEN, HE'S BIG TROUBLE.. GOT TO GET HIM OFF MY BACK FOR NOW!
FEN, GLAD TO SEE YOU!
I DID YOUR DIRTY WORK..TOOK THE RISKS..BLACK-MAILING TO GET YOU CONTRACTS..
FEN, FEN YOU DISAPPOINT ME BUT MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT FOR NOT TELLING YOU SOONER!
TELL ME WHAT?
I USED YOUR MONEY TO HELP FINANCE A BIG DEAL..OF COURSE YOU NOW SHARE IN THE PROFITS!
WHAT DEAL? WHERE'S THE DOUGH?
FEN, MY OPERATIONS COVER A LOT OF ACTIVITIES..I NEED HELP..A MAN I CAN DEPEND ON..I'VE HAD MY EYE ON YOU.. AS A PARTNER!
WHAT KIND OF SPLIT?
HA!HA! STOP AT MY PLACE TONIGHT AND WE'LL WORK OUT ALL THE DE-TAILS! I'M SORRY I DIDN'T ASK YOU SOONER.. PARTNER!
*● FEN'S TYPE IS A THREAT TO ME..TOO COMPETITIVE..AMBITIOUS..HE WOULDN'T WAIT FOR A SLIP BY ME BEFORE HE'D TRY TO MOVE IN AND TAKE OVER EVERYTHING THAT IS MINE! SPOT IS ALSO COMING TONIGHT.. HE'LL TAKE CARE OF FEN!
I'M GOING! ..YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?
YAH! YAH!.. YOU GIVE THE WORD..I CALL PUREN.. AND PLAY THE TAPE!
..NOW, ED!
..O..OKAY, D!
WHAT'S TAKING ED SO LONG?..AT LAST!
RING!
HELLO!..SPOT? WHAT!?
4.

..AND HE'S A MANIAC!..IF HE GETS YOUR FILE..BOSS!..SAM?..HE HUNG UP..*©*~*
..MAKE SURE ALL PAPERS ARE LOCKED AWAY..THEN GET OUT OF HERE..STAY OUT TILL THE BOYS GET THAT NUT!..IF SPOT IS CALLIN* WHAT!
RING!
THAT'S NOT THE GUY SPOT WARNED ME ABOUT!?..WHO?!
RING!
..YOU'RE ASKING FOR TROUB*..HEY!.. LEAVE THAT ALONE!..YOU..YOU KNOW ABOUT ME!?..WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? TAKE OVER?..TURN ME OVER TO THE LAW!..WAIT..LISTEN...
..I'M A REASONABLE MAN!...ALWAYS READY TO DEAL..EVERYTHING IS UP FOR COMPROMISE..
..A GUY'S GOT TO EXPECT TO LOSE A LITTLE BEFORE HE CAN GAIN..RIGHT..SO WE BOTH BEND A LITTLE...
..LOOK..YOU NAME IT..DOPE,STOLEN CARS, BLACKMAIL..AND I GOT A PIECE OF IT..SO I GOT SOMETHING OF VALUE TO OFFER YOU... LET ME REMAIN IN BUSINESS AND YOU GET A CUT..IT DOESN'T EVEN COST YOU ANYTHING..
..I DEAL WITH A LOT OF RESPECTABLE PEOPLE AND WE ALL MAKE OUT! IT'S EITHER PRINCIPLES OR SUCCESS!..A GUY'S A FOOL NOT TO GET HIS SHARE ANYWAY HE CAN..... CAN'T BUCK HUMAN NATURE!
ABSOLUTES DON'T EXIST! ALL TRUTH IS RELATIVE, SUBJECTIVE! LAW AND JUSTICE ARE WHAT PEOPLE WANT THEM TO BE..NON-OBJECTIVE... FLEXIBLE! FLEXIBILITY WORKS FOR THE "HAVE-NOTS"! THAT'S EVERYBODY! WE ALL WANT SOMETHING UNEARNED..UNDESERVED! BUT NOW YOU GOT A CHANCE TO BE LIKE ME..
5.

I'M MAKING SENSE! THERE IS NO "RIGHT" OR "GOOD" TO WORRY ABOUT! FOR YOU..US..THE ONLY GOOD IS THIS PROFITABLE DEAL!
WHY REMOVE ME WHEN OTHERS WILL JUST TAKE MY PLACE! IT CAN'T BE STOPPED! THERE'S NO VALUE IN THE TRUTH, RIGHT OR GOOD!.. PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS SELL OUT FOR A DISHONEST BENIFIT! IT IS THE SMART COMPROMISERS WHO ALWAYS WIN, CONTROL AND RULE!
SO JOIN ME! FOR THOSE WHO WON'T BEND..THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO REASON WITH THEM...
..WITH THIS! NOW YOU GOT NO CHOICE..YOU LOSE EVERY-THING!..WHA..EMPTY!?
OKAY, CLOWN, HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
FEN, I ALMOST REGRET I STILL HAVE TO KILL HIM!
..SPOT! GOD AM I GLAD TO SEE YO... WHAT..WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?
..THE RECORDS!.. CONTROL OF THE RACKETS...FOR THE TAKING!
..SPOT!.. WHAT ARE YOU THINK.. ..SPOT!?
..SAFE..PROTECTED.. ..NO MORE DIRT... ..CLEAN..
NO!
6.

..SPOT, NO..NO!
YAH!
..LISTEN TO ME..YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT... YOU NEED ME..A RESPECTABLE FRONT...POLITICAL CONNECTIONS.. STOP AND THINK!
..NO MORE DIRT..OUT IN THE FILTH..AT LAST..I'LL BE SAFE.. CLEAN..
CLEAN..PROTECTED.. ..AAAAAAHHH
..PTTUI! AH, GET THIS FILTH OFF ME.. PLEASE... AAAAHH!
...I TOLD..HIM.. ABSOLUTE.. TRUTH..WHY WOULDN'T HE ..LISTEN..TO REASON.. ME,THE BOSS.. RIGHT..BEST FOR ALL.... MAKES NO SENSE..NOT TO LISTEN..TO..TO TRUTH..AND FOLLOW..IT..
..I CAN'T STAND IT..GET THIS FILTH OFF ME..AAHH, PLEASE.. HELP ME.. CLEAN.. GOT TO GET CLEAN.. Sob..CLEAN..Sob
..POLICE..
WE DID IT!?.. WHAT'S WRONG?
..YOU! YOU'RE WHAT'S WRONG..HEROES ARE WRONG..CRUEL!
..I..I TRIED..BUT COULDN'T REACH PUREN..YET YOU PULLED IT OFF.. SAVED MY HIDE..BUT INSIDE.. I HATE YOU!.. YOU'RE A REPROACH!
YOU MAKE ME SEE WHAT I AM.. AND I DON'T LIKE MYSELF! I CAN'T TAKE YOUR TRYING TO BE.. TO DO GOOD..WHILE ALL I WANT IS AN EXCUSE WHY I SHOULD-N'T EVEN TRY!
..IT'S ME I REALLY HATE..FOR NOT BEING BETTER THAN I AM! ..IT'S NOT WHAT OTHERS DID TO ME..IT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN DO-ING TO MYSELF!
7.

I TREAT MYSELF AS THE LEAST IMPORTANT PERSON IN THE WORLD! YOU'RE THE OPPOSITE! YOU'RE THE KIND OF MAN I ONCE WANTED TO BE..COULD OF..SHOULD OF BEEN!
..IT'S NOT THE IDEA OF BEING PERFECT..BUT OF JUST TRYING TO DO MY BEST WHEN I COULD HAVE..BUT..I..I SOLD OUT!..MY BEST..TO THE WORST... GOD!
..BEST TO THE WORST!..IT'S NOT EVEN A CHEAP SALE..BUT A BETRAYL OF WHATEVER I HELD AS THE GOOD!..SO WHAT'S LEFT OF MY LIFE..OF ME?!
..ED, IT'S STILL WORTH SALVAGING!
..D., PLEASE..JUST LEAVE ME ALONE..sob sob sob...
NO ONE CAN HELP ED! HE ALONE MUST DECIDE WHAT HIS LIFE SHOULD BE BECAUSE HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BRING IT ABOUT!
MY ACT WAS A PAINFUL RE-MINDER OF HOW MUCH I MISS WORKING! BUT, LIKE ED, I MUST DECIDE WHAT MEANING I WANT TO GIVE MY LIFE.. WHAT PRICE I'M WILLING TO PAY TO ACHIEVE IT..AND WITH NO GUARRANTEES!
#*%@D. IS GOING TO MAKE THIS FILM "THE GIREY DHERO" OR BE DESTROYED..PROFESSIONALY.. EVEN TOTALY! I SWEAR IT!
D. CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO RESIST AND SURVIVE! LIL AND I WORKED OUT SOME PRESSURE ANGLES TO CRUSH HIS NOBLE IDEALS FOREVER..
..THROUGH D.'S BROTHER ED AND THIS GIRL! EITHER WAY.. IF D. STILL HOLDS OUT OR SURRENDERS TO US - HE LOSES! AND EITHER WAY - WE WIN..IF HE CONFORMS TO THE COMMON GOOD OR IF WE DESTROY..GET RID OF HIS KIND! HA! HA! HA! HA!
END 8.
D. SKYS IS A COSTUMED HERO WITHOUT A SET COSTUME WHO WEARS DISGUISES TO FIT THE CRIME OR THE CRIMINAL! D. SKYS IS A PRIVATE HERO ACTING ON THE VIEW THAT MAN IS A RATIONAL ANIMAL; THAT, IN JUSTICE, THE IRRATIONAL AND THE GUILTY MUST NOT PROFIT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE RATIONAL AND THE INNOCENT!

TALE OF AN ANCIENT MARINER

by

Martin L. Greim

"The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the Sea came he;
And he shone bright and on the right
Went down into the sea."

It was this 11th stanza of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" that inspired one William Blake Everett to create the famed Sub-Mariner back in 1939.

Although Bill worked on and created many characters during his lifetime, it is still his "Water World" characters that he will be best remembered for. Come with me now, as we examine those characters and the life of a comic book artist, writer and colorist... BILL EVERETT!

Born May 18, 1917 in Newton, Massachusetts; Bill and his family soon moved to a ranch in Arizona, where he stayed until his mid-teens. He had been led into cartooning by his father, but his father passed away before the realization of that dream came true. Bill returned to the East and enrolled in the Vesper George School of Art, where he stayed for the 1934-35 term. Bill spoke thusly about his education:

"I only have two years of art training and I really don't even have that! I was credited with three years of training because I went through three years in about a year and a half. This was due to inborn talent and the drive to get somewhere fast! I dropped out of both high school and art school and had to make up for this in reading."

Bill's first job was with The Boston Herald-Traveler's retail advertising art staff. He later worked for The Brooks System (civil engineers in Newton, Mass.), The New York Herald Tribune, art editor for Radio News Magazine, Teck Publications, Inc. (Teck later became Ziff-Davis), and art director for Herm Bollin. A combination of Bill's cockyness and the fact he didn't get along very well with Herm, led to his being fired. It was at this point Bill Everett happened into comics! Walter Holze, a former co-worker of his at Teck, told him of a new type of book being produced. It was a comic book! The following week Bill was working for John Harley at Centaur Comics doing "Skyrocket Steele."

From that begining, came a long and distinguished career with many companies and creations. Here is a list of the full color comic books and their characters:

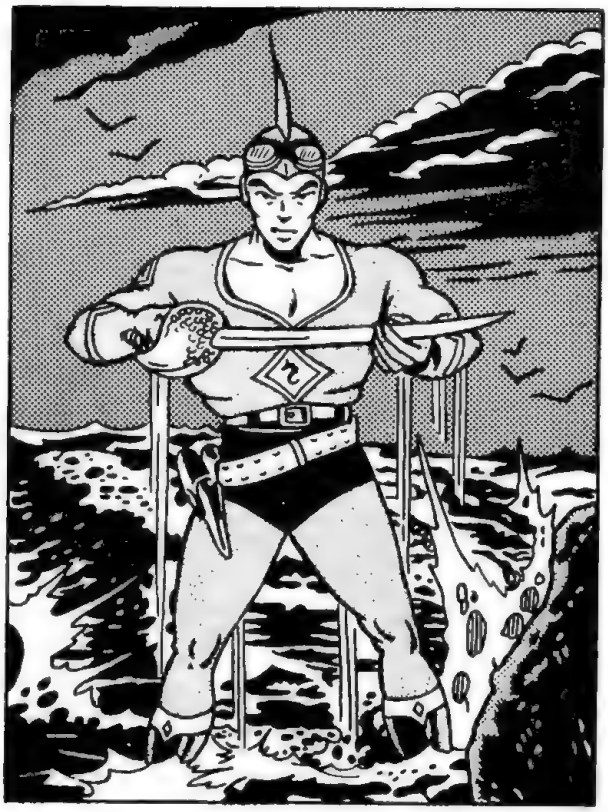
(Centaur) Skyrocket Steele, Dirk the Demon, A-Man;
(Marvel) The Sub-Mariner, The Fin, The Patriot, Venus, Namora, Marvel Boy, Daredevil, The Hulk, Dr. Strange, and many of the Marvel horror stories. He also inked the following books at Marvel...Capt. America, Ka-Zar, Gullivar Jones, Rawhide Kid, Black Widow, and a Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. story.
(Novelty) The Chameleon, Sub-Zero, White Streak, Bull's-Eye Bill;
(Eastern Color) Hydroman, Music Master;
(Hillman) The Conqueror.
Bill also worked for pre-war Quality and post-war Orbit.

Commander LEONARD McKENZIE

"Water, Water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where
Nor any drop to drink."

The last two lines of Coleridge's rime are surely the most often quoted, as well as the most often misquoted. It is these lines that lead us into Everett's first Water World creation...THE SUB-MARINER!

"In 1939, a few of us banded together forming our own informal art service. Carl Burgos, Paul Gustafson, Ben Thompson and a few others offered a package deal to the publishers. We would write the story and do the complete artwork, as part of a 32-page or 48-page book. We started out very small, but rapidly built.



THE FIN

by

This outfit was called Funnies Inc. One of our very first customers was Martin Goodman, who founded what was then called Timely Comics."

It was at this point Everett created The Sub-Mariner. While holding an informal story conference at the Webster Bar with Carl Burgos, creator of The Human Torch, they decided to use the two elements, fire and water, for some characters. Everett had been reading Jack London and deep-sea novels by James Conelly. This coupled with "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" gave Bill the idea for the Sub-Mariner.

THE SUB-MARINER

Marvel Mystery Comics #1, 1939, told of an American Naval expedition to the Antarctic, led by Commander Leonard McKenzie. The expedition was unwittingly wreaking havoc upon an undersea kingdom, by dynamiting icebergs on the surface. The Emperor of this kingdom sent his daughter, Princess Fen, to spy on McKenzie; but instead she fell in love with him. Shortly, the undersea kingdom prepared to attack. Once again, McKenzie blasted away at the ice and the army was destroyed. Angered at what he had done, Princess Fen jumped overboard and returned to her people, where later Prince Namor, The Sub-Mariner, was born.

Almost every comic reader knows that origin story, but how many are aware that Commander McKenzie didn't return to America with his original expedition? Sub-Mariner #32, June, 1949, carried this origin one step further. (This was the last issue before Sub-Mariner faded into limbo for a time.) Everett depicted McKenzie, frantic to find his bride, leaving his ship to search for her upon the ice pack. McKenzie disappeared and the crew of his ship searched day and night for him. They were forced to give up this search, to avoid the ice that was entrapping their ship. Anchor is weighed and a prayer is offered from the ship, that if McKenzie is still alive, his end comes quickly. McKenzie is alive and has suffered a broken leg. Princess Fen, who had been watching the departure of his ship, discovers the trapped McKenzie. She has two soldiers carry him to her kingdom's surface city within an iceberg. His leg is treated; but that night, as he sleeps, two of the kingdom's war secretaries try to kill him. Fen, who had been standing guard, blasts them with an ice-ray gun and saves him. Angered, she confronts the high council and tells them she has strategic reasons for keeping the hated surface man alive, and that in The Emperor's absence she demands that her wishes be respected. As Fen leaves the council chamber, it buzzes with excitement. "Her marriage isn't legal - it was performed by their laws, not ours!" "It was just part of our spy plan...The Emperor won't like this!"

Fen tells McKenzie he is in great danger. McKenzie replies, "You can't let them kill me! You-you love me, don't you Princess? Don't you???" Fen hesitates, remembering all her people that were killed by the explosions..."Love you? I...I don't know, Leonard... We...We'd better talk about it some other time..." That later time does come, as Fen realizes she is truly in love with Leonard McKenzie. A few days later, despite protests, they are married by the High Priest. Several days go by, when, without warning, The Emperor arrives! He summons Princess Fen to face his wrath! Fen begs for mercy, saying that McKenzie is innocent of any wrong doing. At this point, McKenzie enters the hall and is accused of being a mass-murderer. He tries to explain that the scientific expedition had no knowledge of the cities under the ice and that the explosives were necessary to blast their way through the ice-jams. The Emperor screams, "Lies! Nothing but lies!" and is about to have McKenzie executed when a thunderous blast shakes the palace. Six fathoms beneath the ice pack, chaos reigns. Another expedition has come to the Antarctic!

While The Emperor is distracted, Princess Fen leads McKenzie to the safety of the American ship. When she returns to face her father, The Emperor condems her to be imprisoned for the rest of her life! Months go by, when news reaches The Emperor that Princess Fen has borne a son! At first The Emperor believes this to be a catastrophe and wants to send Fen and her son to join McKenzie. However, when he realizes the baby is his only heir, he pardons Princess Fen, with the condition she must keep the baby in exile for ten years, then he is to be brought before him. Exactly ten years later, Princess Fen presents her son to his grandfather. The Emperor is pleased and states, "From this day forth, you will be known as Prince Namor, The Sub-Mariner!"

When Namor reached maturity, he encountered two divers from another expedition. Thinking they were some kind of robots, he attacked and destroyed them. This was Namor's first encounter with the "surface people." When he returned to the Palace to report this encounter, he was told it was time for him to go to America and avenge the destruction done to his race. Thus began the adventures of The Sub-Mariner.

"And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow."

There were women in The Sub-Mariner's life...Dorma, who was first introduced as a cousin and later as a star crossed lover. However, she is not so connected with Everett, as are the next three I'm going to mention.

BETTY DEAN...The one surface being Namor cared anything

BILL EVERETT

NAMORA

BETTY DEAN

NAMORITA

about. He first encountered her when he was on a rampage in New York. (Marvel Mystery #3, Jan. 1940.) She was a policewoman assigned to capture him. She never succeeded physically, but did so emotionly! Betty proved to be a very enduring woman. She was with Namor in the 40's, and was with him again in his return during the 50's. She made perhaps her most dramatic return in 1968, in an Everett inspired story written by Roy Thomas titled "In the Rage of Battle!" (Sub-Mariner #8, Dec. 1968.) During a tremendous battle with The Thing, The Sub-Mariner is halted by an aged woman. We find she is a widow named Mrs. Prentiss, who, before she was married, was known as Betty Dean!

NAMORA...Or Aquaria Nautica Neptunia, as was her real name, began her career in Marvel Mystery Comics #82. Although she wasn't created by Everett, she has been so connected with Everett drawn Sub-Mariner's, over the years, that his is the accepted version. She joined Namor, as the sole survivor of an undersea massacre that destroyed many of The Sub-Mariner's people. A criminal by the name of "Stoop" Richards led his men, in diving gear, into Namora's city; plundered all its wealth and killed all its people. Namor found Namora wounded and soon after they teamed up to bring the criminals to justice. In the #39, April, 1955 issue of Sub-Mariner, another version of Namora is told. An Everett version tells of how she meets Namor, when he is a boy of 15 and we find that her father named her after Namor and that she is his cousin. Namora gives a cocky Namor a lesson in humility, when she saves him from entrapment in a wrecked submarine's torpedo tube. Namora was so popular in the 40's that she even had 3 issues of her own magazine. She didn't return in the 60's. However, when Everett once again took over the art and scripting on the Sub-Mariner in the 50th issue (June, 1972.); Namora was to play an important part in the introduction of our next character.

NAMORITA...Daughter of Namora. As Namor himself put it, "She has the sting of a butterfly, but the courage of a barracuda!" This was an apt discription of her character. A hybrid, like Namor, she could fly through the air with ease. This was a feat her mother was never able to accomplish. It was never told who Namora had married; but whoever it was, it must have been a surface man. For how else would she be able to perform feats like Namor's? In Sub-Mariner #51, we find the details of Namora's demise that had been reported in issue #50. It seems she was poisoned by the same woman who had killed Namor's love, Lady Dorma...LYYRA, Empress of Lemura! Namor finished her off by knocking her into a pool of oil.

In Everett's creation of Nita, he combined the same spirit present in Namor, with one of the sexiest adolescent bodies ever presented in comics. He also gave her a touch of humor...both in actions and in facial expressions. She remains as one of my favorite Everett creations!

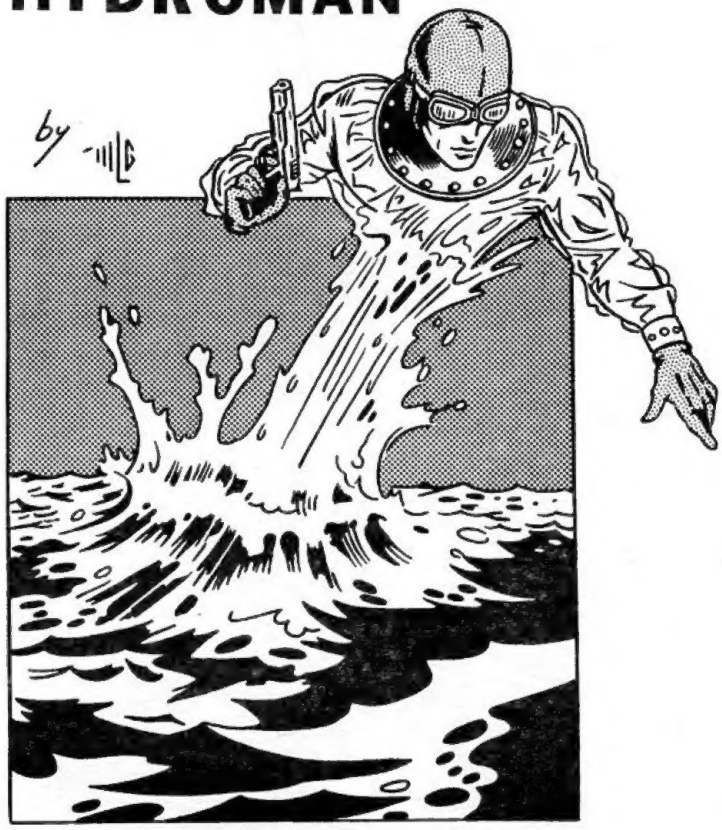
In 1954, The Sub-Mariner re-appeared after an absence of four years, and Everett's art was at its peak. It was at this time, the glory seeking stepson of The Emperor made his appearance.

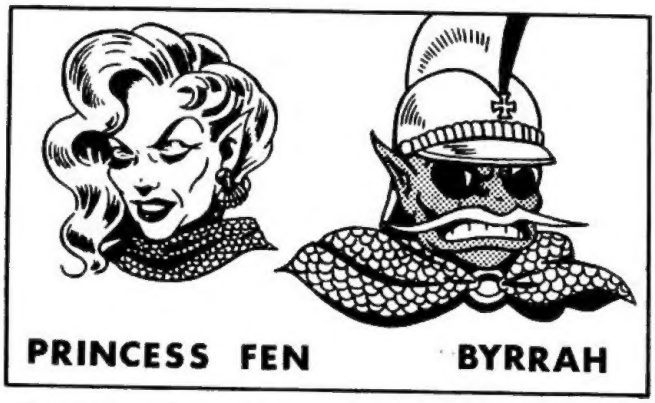
PRINCE BYRRAH...He and Namor were at constant odds! In Sub-Mariner #35 (1954) Byrrah tricked The Emperor into going to war with a small military-governed country in the South Atlantic. He thought that by leading an army and conquering this country, he would gain favor in The Emperor's eyes. Namor turned the tables on Byrrah and made him look like a fool. In turn Byrrah blamed Namor for his military defeat and had him banished from the kingdom. And so it went...Namor winning out against Byrrah, The Emperor's step-son, every time; but never quite completely!

The Sub-Mariner had become such a success, that in mid-1940, Steve Douglas, editor of Eastern Color's Famous Funnies, asked Bill to create a water hero for him.

HYDROMAN...was the result! Hydroman appeared in issues #1 thru #15 of Reg'lar Fellers Heroic Comics (1940-42) and in Heroic #16 thru #29 (1943-45). Everett did the art on the strip in '40 and '41. In Hydroman's first appearance, Harry Thurston, a young chemical engineer, compounded a formula to convert human flesh and blood into water. A huge container of the remarkable solution was spilled and splashed over Bob Blake, Harry's friend. This caused Bob to disintegrate and become a pool of water on the laboratory floor! Promptly an antidote was concocted, and with the aid of this, Bob regained his natural form. Bob then discovered that he could control this phenomenal change, merely by power of thought. When Everett created Hydroman's alter ego, he used the first name of his brother and his own middle name. In Hydroman's second appearance, Harry Thurston created a uniform for him made out of

HYDROMAN





Translite. It was transparent and so tough that nothing could penetrate it...not even bullets. Everett handled Hydroman in a more humorous manner than he had done on The Sub-Mariner. Hydroman appeared out of water-taps, fire hydrants, glasses of water and even traveled through sewers.

The last of Everett's Water World heroes only appeared three times. However, he's one of the most interesting, due to a weapon he acquired in his last adventure. Appearing in Daring Mystery #7 & #8, and again in Comedy #9...it's THE FIN!

U.S. Naval Cadet, Lt. Peter Noble was the sole survivor of a submarine wreck. He found, as he escaped from the doomed sub, that by some strange whim of fate he was endowed with the faculty of living under water as well as on land. Peter found himself in an underseas cavern, dominated by green sea creatures. He was soon locked in mortal combat with their leader. He overcame him and became the sea creature's leader. He then added a costume and a sharks fin headpiece to become...The Fin. In his last adventure, in Comedy, he discovered a cutlass in a sunken ship. He found that this cutlass could cut through any metal and that it gave him the strength of twenty men. The sword had another strange property. Because a wave of extreme disgust would come over anyone but himself that held the sword, Peter was its sole owner. I've never heard of any other comic book hero having a similar weapon.

In 1942, Everett joined the army. It was here he met Gwenn Randall, a girl working for the Pentagon's Ordinance Dept., and married her. In February of 1946 Everett was discharged from the service. He eventually renewed his association with Martin Goodman and began working on The Sub-Mariner again, as well as the Venus and Namora books. When the Golden Age of Comics was on the wane, Bill turned his attention to drawing horror stories. He also worked on humor magazines like Loco, Snafu and Cracked, where he was a staff artist in the early 60's, not to mention a "Little Annie Fanny" type magazine called Pussycat. Bill began working in the greeting card field and became Planning Director at Norcross and later on, art director at Rust-Craft Greeting Cards in Dedham, Mass., as well as art supervisor for Eaton Paper. When the super heroes were on the rise again, in the 1960's, Bill once again took pen in hand to work in the comic book media.

In 1967, I wanted to do a feature on my boyhood hero, Bill Everett, for Bob Cosgrove's fanzine Champion. I managed to get into contact with Bill and it began a long line of correspondence between us. Always creative, Bill's first letter to me contained a humorous autobiography, which I'm reprinting portions of here for your enjoyment.

"I think I was born about 500 years ago, under the Ross Sea Shelf in the Antarctic, and I started drawing pictures the day they came out with the ball-point-pen that would write under water. I was about 3 at the time and up until then I'd been drawing with an icicle. This didn't work out too well, though, because I had to use snow for ink, and I didn't have any shoe-polish to dye it with. Besides, I had to draw on slabs of ice.

So I gave it all up for a couple of years and concentrated on learning how to swim. This helped a lot when a guy named Commander McKenzie came along and decided to blast out a few channels in the ice shelf. Somebody down there didn't like him, and there was a stupid war, or something. Being a baby myself, only a few hundred years old at the time, I don't remember much about it. There was this doll, however, a chick that called herself Princess Fen, who fell in love with this here Navy Commander and marries him, and they have some sort of kook kid they call The Sub-Mareener (or Mariner), and he grows up mad at the world, and all that jazz, and the first thing you know, I'm drawing pictures of him. I don't know why, really. He wasn't all that good looking.

Anyway, having been weaned on water, I got on this wet kick, and here was this guy called himself "The Fin" (because he wore one on his head - of all places!) who wanted me to draw pictures of him too; and another jerk named "Hydroman", who kept dripping out of kitchen faucets and spurting out of fire-hydrants, and there I was, sitting on the bottom of a gold-fish bowl, trying to keep a publisher happy with a wet piece of paper.

Along the line I got married and have a daughter and two sons. Things had been sort of up and down with Namor, until dear old "Smilin' Stan" decided to create a new SM image. He got the idea when he decided to change Namor's enviroment to some place in limbo called "Atlantis" (I've been there and I can guarantee that it doesn't exist). Guy named Plato wrote a great story about it, but I can't remember he ever mentioned Namor.

Thanks again for your interest. With a burble, and a gurgle and a whole bunch of bubbles - Yours from the coral reef...BILL EVERETT"

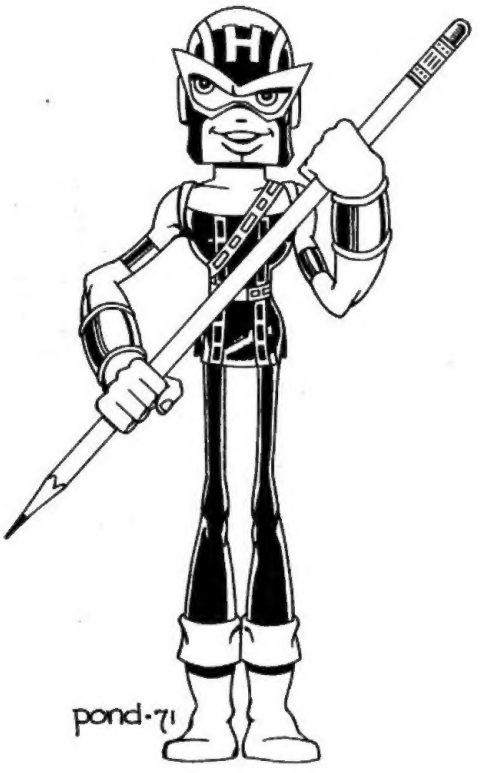
Toward the end of his career, bad fortune plagued Bill. A fall from a bus crippled him for many months. Then on February 27, 1973, Bill Everett passed away following a series of heart attacks. Comic readers everywhere lost a great talent...and I lost a friend. I only wish it were in my power to create a more fitting memorial! -mlg

"The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door."

The SUB-MARINER

by -mlg

From the Circular File



WILLIAM J. FOX JR.
511 Arthur Ave.
Scottdale, Pa. 15683

Another great issue, this one on magic, even. Of course. I'm refering to C.C. #14. Ray Miller came through with another great article. The research alone was staggering. But what makes your writers stand apart from the average is their ability to write in a readable style. In Tom Fagan's case it's not only readable, but innovative. Believe me, this is extremely important. Being a high school English teacher I have the chance to see many that are almost unreadable. I greatly enjoyed your Fredericks interview. We don't seem to get as much information about strip artists as we should. I also enjoyed the personal touches on his family, hobbies, etc.

The art almost surpassed the text. It's really fantastic to see a fanzine with great articles giving us as much art as some of the expensive ripoff "art" zines do, at one fifth the cost. The Steranko page was the highlight, with the rest being a highly important contribution and supplement to the information in the articles. Another breakthrough! Articles and illustrations that actually go hand and hand. I'll use that tired overworn phrase again to describe my reaction to the Ditko story--I don't agree with everything he implies, but I enjoy it anyway. Especially the Creeper-like aspect of the barbarian costume the hero wore. Over all, a very good issue.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY POLICY TO GIVE MY READERS THE THE MOST FOR THEIR MONEY. ARTICLES WITH ILLUSTRATIONS THAT GO WITH THEM IS PART OF THIS POLICY. I'M GLAD YOU ENJOY THIS EFFORT.

LAURINE WHITE
5408 Leader Avenue
Sacramento, Calif. 95841

The Ibis article was the usual well written job to be expected in Comic Crusader. The Fujitake strip was quite nice. I also liked your picture of Ibis, the dragon and the devil. Your idea of using a single theme with each issue makes C.C. stand out from the contents of the usual fanzine. Using magicians resulted in a good issue.

That was some picture of the Amazing Amazon. Are you sure she wasn't looking for the powder room?

I still think Tom Fagan overwrites! And I don't mean that his articles are too long. I am referring to his style--too florid. But when the subject is a Golden Age character like Mr. Mystic, the results are more satisfactory than his previous article, which covered too many heroes. And the Mr. Mystic article was well illustrated by you, as usual.

The only piece of art in the issue I didn't like was a bat-eared head by Wayne Pond. No comment on the Mr. A replacement.

It has been so long since I've seen an illustration by Wendy Fletcher. None of her paintings graced the art shows at last year's Westercon or LACon. Can you get more artwork by her? Please!

I enjoy your articles in The Buyer's Guide and hope you and your family are doing well.

AS MR. FOX'S LETTER JUST POINTED OUT, TOM FAGAN'S ARTICLES ARE INNOVATIVE. THE ARTICLE YOU REFER TO (in C.C. #13) WAS MEANT TO BE A SHORT LOOK AT A NUMBER OF CHARACTERS WITH A 13 RELATED BACKGROUND. TO WRITE OF ONE OR TWO CHARACTERS WAS NOT THE IDEA! TOM'S MR. MYSTIC ARTICLE REMAINS AS ONE OF THE TOP PIECES EVER WRITTEN FOR A FAN PUBLICATION. I'M A BIG FAN OF WENDY (FLETCHER) PINI TOO! I'LL PUBLISH ANYTHING SHE'LL LET ME! I AND MY FAMILY "STILL LIVE!"

CRAIG A. SHUTT
134 Wolcott Dr.
Youngstown, Ohio 44512

Please, no "I told you so," if you don't mind! I've returned to C.C. sadder but wiser. One year ago when Comic Crusader upped its price, I gave up on it, like the fool I usually come out. Well, after a year of looking around, comparing prices and quality, I'm back! Like the great man once said, "I didn't know what I had until I lost it."

WHAT CAN I SAY? YOU'VE SAID IT ALL! GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK!

JIM CASSARA
6285 N.W. 111 Terr.
Hia. Fla. 33012

Comic Crusader #14 lived up to your usual high standards of artistic and written quality. The cover, while very good, was not of "Cover Quality," that is the design of it was rather unbalanced. Fujitake's superb interior illustration of Ibis would have made a much better cover. Dennis really shined this issue, as his editorial illustration and strip art were excellent. The back cover by Wendy Pini was just fantastic. This is the first I've seen by this very talented person, and I am definitely looking forward to more work by her, preferably in Comic Crusader!

The pencil illustrations by Kirby and Steranko were excellent and were certainly appropriate for your "magic" issue. The interview this issue was a bit longer than usual, but still made for enjoyable reading. One thing that makes your interviews stand out is that you interview good people who most fans have heard little about. What can one say about the articles on Ibis and Mr. Mystic? They were both very, very informative and enjoyable. The rather short piece on Black Magic Comics by Bob Cosgrove was especially interesting to me, since a large part of my collection is devoted to the works of Simon & Kirby. The other features were all very good, except Newton's Ibis, which was pure crap and not deserving to be in such a fine issue.

DON NEWTON'S IBIS "CRAP"? DON'S RENDERING CAPTURED THE FLAVOR OF THE IBIS STRIP PERFECTLY. HIS WORK CERTAINLY BELONGS IN ANY FAN OR PRO PUBLICATION LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET HIM! WITNESS HIS FANTASTIC WORK THIS ISSUE!

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